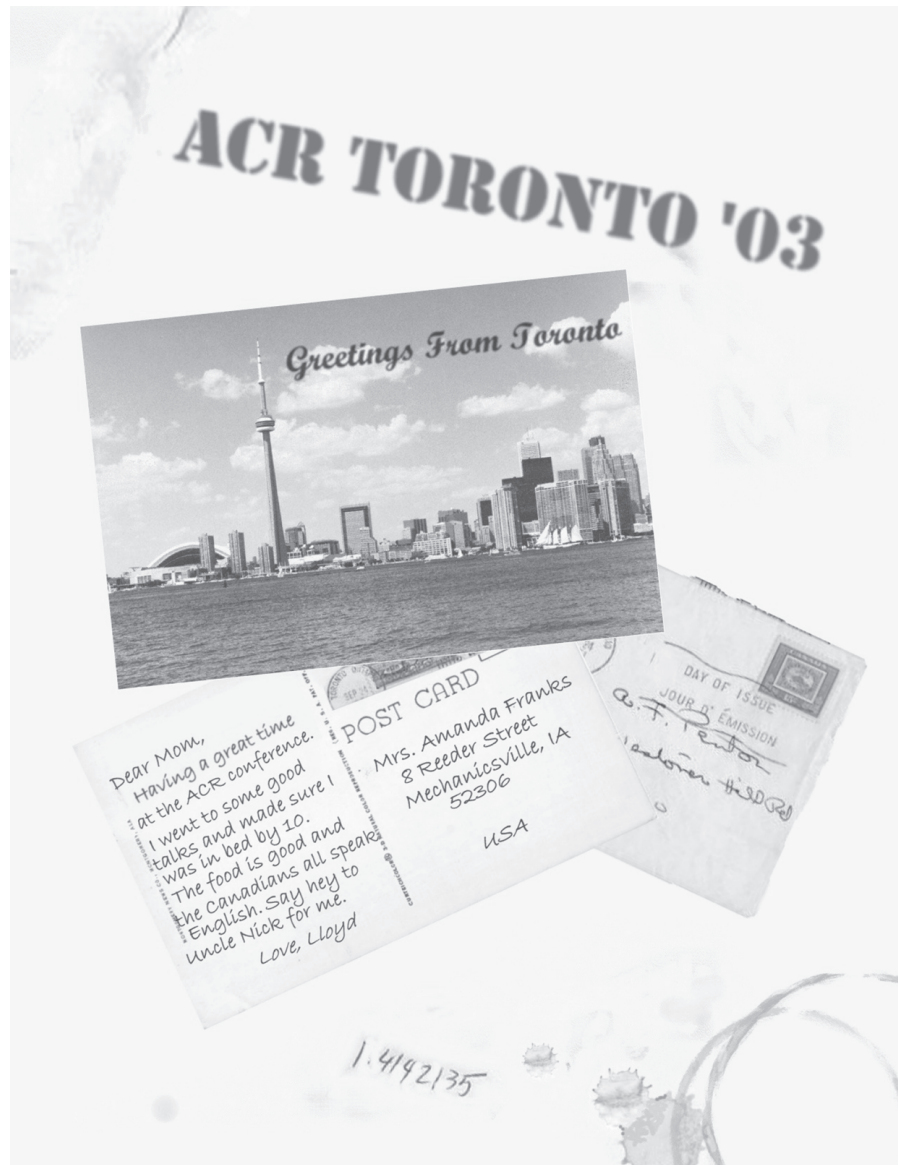


Advances in Consumer Research

Volume
XXXI



Editors
Barbara E. Kahn
Mary Frances Luce

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Barbara E. Kahn and Mary Frances Luce, Editors

Advances in Consumer Research, Volume 31

(Valdosta, GA: Association for Consumer Research, 2004)

Preface

The thirty-fourth Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) was held at the Fairmont Royal York hotel in Toronto Canada, October 8–12 2003. This volume is comprised of the presentations made at the conference.

The conference was quite well-attended, with approximately 725 attendees from a wide variety of disciplines and geographic areas. Consistent with ACR tradition, the conference and therefore this volume represents an eclectic approach to understanding consumption, covering research spanning various methodological, theoretical and philosophical approaches. As always, the wide variety of attendees, papers, comments, and discussions illustrated the vibrant nature of the wider ACR community.

We have many people to thank for their contributions to ACR 2004. Of course, the paper authors and presenters deserve credit for the high-quality intellectual content of the conference. We felt fortunate to have an overwhelming number of submissions for ACR 2004, but unfortunate to have to choose among them! Specifically, there were 86 special session submissions and 248 competitive paper submissions to ACR 2004. From these submissions, we were able to accept 50 special sessions and 130 competitive papers. This volume contains summaries of special sessions and either full papers or abstracts for competitive paper submissions. Culling this extremely high-quality pool of submissions to ACR conference size was a huge task, and we relied on a talented and dedicated pool of scholars to help us. We thank the 57 members of our program committee for their insightful feedback regarding the special sessions. We also thank our 187 competitive paper reviewers, most of whom reviewed multiple papers in a detailed and timely manner.

We thank Jennifer Escalas (University of Arizona) and Rebecca Ratner (University of North Carolina) for organizing 10 roundtable discussions. We thank Eric Yorkston (University of Southern California) for organizing the working paper session where 45 works in progress were presented on Friday night of the conference. We also want to thank Jennifer, Rebecca and Eric for functioning as our ACR collaborators, providing valuable insight as the conference unfolded.

We thank Russ Belk and Robert Kozinets for conceiving and running ACR's Second Film Festival, which included 13 original films on consumer research topics.

We thank Chris Janiszewski (University of Florida) and Donnie Lichtenstein (University of Colorado at Boulder) for running the ACR doctoral symposium immediately before the conference in Toronto.

We were very fortunate to chair ACR in the beautiful and entertaining city of Toronto. We thank Andy Mitchell of the University of Toronto for his insider information and many efforts that allowed the ACR membership to enjoy this wonderful location. We also extend special thanks also to Steve Arenberg of the University of Toronto for his event-planning skill and advice. Finally, we thank several student volunteers from the University of Toronto: Melanie Dempsey, Darlene Walsh, Meng Zhang, Xiuping (Lily) Li, Liyuan (Vivian) Wei, and Hemant Sangwan. Beyond providing this invaluable human capital, the Rotman School of the University of Toronto also provided sponsorship of our Saturday night reception at Bambu by the lake restaurant.

As seems to be typical for ACR Co-Chairs, we would have been lost without the advice and help of Kathy Brown (University of Florida) and Jim Muncy (Valdosta State University). They provided both institutional knowledge and perhaps more importantly moral support.

When we agreed to co-chair ACR, we were confident of the high intellectual quality of the submissions and of the generosity of the community of ACR Program Committee members and Competitive Paper Reviewers. We knew that we would have great material and excellent guidance for the conference. However, we were worried about one thing—the huge administrative load involved in processing all of the papers! Our fears were more than allayed by the amazingly capable, and always good-natured, support we received from Meredith Wickman (University of Pennsylvania). In addition, we give sincere thanks to Alyssabeth Klein and Charles Darkoh for their administrative help.

We are grateful to Steve Barnett for producing this volume. Thanks to Bob Meyer for the cover artwork and for much support and guidance regarding the conference. Thanks to Rajiv Vaidyanathan (University of Minnesota) for running the website that kept ACR members involved and informed.

Finally, of course, we are particularly grateful to Wes Hutchinson, 2004 president of ACR, for giving us this wonderful opportunity. We also thank Wes for his grounded, rational perspective and executive decision-making ability in determining how we should react in the face of the global uncertainty that surrounded the SARS epidemic and the potential effects it could have on our conference planning.

We hope we have not forgotten anyone, but given the generosity of the ACR community, we fear we have. Of course, the conference, and this volume, is at its core a reflection of the community of ACR scholars, so our thanks go to all of you.

Barbara E. Kahn, University of Pennsylvania
Mary Frances Luce, University of Pennsylvania
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Rebecca K. Ratner, University of North Carolina

Film Festival

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Robert Kozinets, Northwestern University

Working Papers

Eric Yorkston, University of Southern California

Special Thanks to

Kathy Brown, University of Florida
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Darlene Walsh, University of Toronto
Alyssabeth Klein, University of Pennsylvania
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October 8-12, 2003
The Fairmont Royal York
Toronto, Canada

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 9, 2003**

**ACR
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
12:00–5:00 P.M.**

**SCP
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
4:30–7:30 P.M.**

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 9, 2003**

**ACR
WELCOMING RECEPTION
6:00–8:00 P.M.**

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 10, 2003**

JCR ASSOCIATE EDITOR'S MEETING
8:00–9:00 A.M.

FILM FESTIVAL
8:00 A. M. – 5:00 P.M.

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AND
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--

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Chair: Sooyeon Nikki Lee, New York University
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Discussion Leader: Drazen Prelec, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Re-introducing Associative Mechanisms Into Persuasion Research
 Maria Galli, INSEAD
 Amitava Chattopadhyay, INSEAD
 C. Miguel Brendl, INSEAD

1.6 **Roundtable: Markets and Cultures**

Discussion Leaders: A. Fuat Firat, Arizona State University West
 Alladi Venkatesh, Center for Research on Information Technology and Organizations

Participants:	Aaron Ahuvia	Annamamma Joy
	Soren Askegaard	Robert Kozinets
	Gary Barmossy	Laurie Meamber
	Russell W. Belk	Per Østergaard
	Dominique Bouchet	Lisa Penaloza
	Dan Cook	John Schouten
	Janeen A. Costis	Jonathan Schroeder
	Fuat Firat	Craig Thompson
	James Fitchett	Alladi Venkatesh
	Rika Houston	Detlev Zwick

1.7 Special Session: Drivers and Contextual Moderators of Consumer Value Formation in Participative Pricing Mechanisms

Chair: Uptal Dholakia, Rice University
Discussion Leader: J. Jeffrey Inman, University of Pittsburgh

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Atanu Sinha, University of Colorado at Boulder

1.8 Special Session: The Limits of Self-Regulation in Behavior, Consumption and Choice

Chair: Susan Jung Grant, University of Colorado
Discussion Leader: Brian Sternthal, Northwestern University

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The Effect of Goal Orientation on Self-Regulatory Depletion

Susan Jung Grant, University of Colorado
Jongwon Park, Korea University

1.9 Special Session: Beyond the Sacred-Profane Dichotomy in Consumer Research

Chair: Eric J. Arnould, University of Nebraska
Discussion Leader: Douglas B. Holt, Harvard University

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FRIDAY
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2.5 **Special Session: The Psychology of Auctions: Enriching Models of Bidder and Seller Behavior**

Chair: Peter T. L. Popkowski Leszczyc, University of Alberta
Discussion Leader: Dipankar Chakravarti, University of Colorado

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Ramanathan Subramanian, University of Pittsburgh
Vikas Mittal, University of Pittsburgh
J. Jeffrey Inman, University of Pittsburgh

Reserves, Regret and Rejoicing in Open English Auctions
Eric A. Greenleaf, New York University

Bidding Frenzy: Intensity of Competitive Interaction Among Bidders and Product Valuation in Auctions
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Kathryn Braun-LaTour, Marketing Memories
Hayden Noel, Baruch College

Participants: Sara L. Appleton Chris Janiszewski
Joe Belch Michael La Tour
Mickey Belch Sharmistha Law
Kathryn Braun-LaTour Hayden Noel
Amitav Chakravarti Surendra Singh

2.7 **Special Session: New Frontiers in the Construction of Preferences**

Chair: Nathan Novemsky, Yale University
Discussion Leader: Drazen Prelec, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Norbert Schwarz, University of Michigan

The Psychology of Matching and the Prominence Effect
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Eldar Shafir, Princeton University

A Behavioral Analysis of Real Estate Prices
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Yan Zhang, China Europe International Business School

2.8 **Special Session: Beyond Brand Image: Analyzing the Culture of Brands**

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Discussion Leader: Susan Fournier, Harvard University

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Zeynep Arsel, University of Wisconsin, Madison

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2.9 **Special Session: Corporate Social Responsibility: A Consumer Perspective**

Chair: Jill G. Klein, INSEAD
Discussion Leader: N. Craig Smith, London School of Business

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Sankar Sen, Baruch College

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Yeosun Yoon, Rice University
Zeynep Gürhan-Canli, University of Michigan

The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Consumers' Attributions and Brand Evaluations After a Product-Harm Crisis
Niraj Dawar, Western Ontario
Jill G. Klein, INSEAD

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 10, 2003**

**ACR LUNCHEON
&
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**
NOON –1:45 P.M.

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 10, 2003**

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Discussion Leader: Barbara Kahn, University of Pennsylvania

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Rosellina Ferraro, Duke University
James R. Bettman, Duke University

Diversification and Partition Dependence in Consumer Choice
Craig R. Fox, University of California, Los Angeles
Rebecca K. Ratner, University of North Carolina
Daniel S. Lieb, Duke University

Variety-Seeking Strategies in Hedonic Choice
Jaap Boter, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
J. Jeffrey Inman, University of Pittsburgh
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3.3 **Competitive Paper Session: Senses and Experiences**

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Discussion Leader: Drazen Prelec, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Bruce Hardie, London Business School Eric J. Johnson, Columbia University Robert Meyer, University of Pennsylvania John Walsh, IMD	
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Jin Gyo Kim, Massachusetts Institute of Technology	
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Fred M. Feinberg, University of Michigan Christina L. Brown, University of Michigan	

3.9 Special Session: The Gendered Nature of the Evolving Technoscape: Evaluating Identity, Representation, and Locality

Chair: Susan Dobscha, Bentley College
 Discussion Leader: Alladi Venkatesh, University of California, Irvine

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 Natasha Tolstikova, University of Maine, Orono

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Chair: Donnel A. Briley, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Peter R. Darke, University of British Columbia
Discussion Leader: Dale W. Griffin, Stanford University

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Itamar Simonson, Stanford University

The Paradoxical Effects of Luck

Peter R. Darke, University of British Columbia
Jonathan L. Freedman, University of Toronto

Negative Effects of Luck-based Promotions on Purchase

Donnel A. Briley, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
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4.5 Special Session: Branding Across Cultures: The Role of Analytic and Holistic Thinking

Chair: Deborah Roedder John, University of Minnesota
Discussion Leader: Durairaj Maheswaran, New York University

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Carol M. Motley, Howard University

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	Ronald Goodstein	Laura Peracchio
	Sonya Grier	Americus Reed
	Curt Haugtvedt	Jerome D. Williams
	Geraldine R. Henderson	David Wooten
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4.7 **Special Session: Context Effects in Choice**

Chair: Alexander Chernec, Northwestern University
Discussion Leader: Joel Huber, Duke University

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Andrew D. Gershoff, Columbia University
Ran Kivetz, Columbia University

4.8 **Special Session: How Regulatory Focus Influences Consumer Evaluations, Judgments and Choices**

Chair: Utpal M. Dholakia, Rice University
Discussion Leader: Tory E. Higgins, Columbia University

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When Do Consumers Use Conceptual Versus Experiential Processing Heuristics?
Rui Zhu, Rice University
Joan Meyers-Levy, University of Minnesota

Sequent Impulsive Choices Within a Consumption Episode: The Role of Regulatory Focus
Utpal M. Dholakia, Rice University
Richard P. Bagozzi, Rice University

4.9 **Special Session: The Positive and Negative Consequences of Materialism: What Are They and When Do They Occur?**

Chair: Marsha Richins, University of Missouri
Discussion Leader: Thomas C. O'Guinn, University of Illinois

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The Influence of Materialism on Product Satisfaction

Jianfeng Wang, University of Arizona
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The Relationship of Materialism to Compulsive Hoarding and Indecisiveness in Indian and American College Students

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**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 10, 2003**

**JCR
EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD MEETING
AND RECEPTION
4:30–6:30 P.M.**

**ACR RECEPTION
AND
WORKING PAPER SESSION
6:00–8:00 P.M.**

**FRIDAY
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**WORKING PAPER SESSION
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**SATURDAY
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**KEITH HUNT
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7:00–8:15 A.M.**

**JCP
EDITORIAL BOARD MEETING
7:30–9:00 A.M.**

**FILM FESTIVAL
8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.**

**SATURDAY
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5.2 **Special Session: Bliss is Ignorance? Emotion, Evaluation, and the Feeling Brain**

Chair: Stacy L. Wood, University of South Carolina
Discussion Leader: Mary Frances Luce, University of Pennsylvania

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James R. Bettman, Duke University

Are Happy People Mindless or Mindful Processors of Information?
Yiorgos A. Bakamitsos, Dartmouth College
Angela Y. Lee, Northwestern University

The Heat of the Moment: The Effect of Sexual Arousal on Sexual Decision Making
Dan Ariely, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
George Loewenstein, Carnegie Mellon University

5.3 **Competitive Paper Session: Cause Marketing and Consumer Skepticism**

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5.4 **Competitive Paper Session: Hedonic Consumption**

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5.5 Special Session: Consumer Reactions to Marketing Practices: Skepticism, Suspicion, and Payback

Chair: Peter R. Darke, University of British Columbia

Discussion Leader: Margaret C. Campbell, University of Colorado

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Christina L. Brown, University of Michigan

Aradhna Krishna, University of Michigan

One Rotten Apple Spoils the Barrel: Advertising Deception, Defensive Processing, and Consumer Suspicion

Peter R. Darke, University of British Columbia

Robin J.B Ritchie, University of Western Ontario

The Effects of Pro-Boycott and Anti-Boycott Communications on the Individual Boycott Decision

Vicki Morwitz, New York University

Sankar Sen, Boston University

5.6 Roundtable: Planting the Seed of Consumer Behavior in Latin America: Is it Time for ACR-Latin America

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Discussion Leaders: Silvia Gonzalez, ITESM
David Luna, SUNY

Participants:	Gustavo de Mello	Fernando Alvarez Kuri
	Jennifer Escalas	Daniel Laufer
	Silvia Gonzalez	David Luna
	Joseph Goodman	Ana Valenzuela
	Amanda Helm	Rebecca Walker
	Dawn Iacobucci	Martin Zemborain

5.7 Special Session: The Role of Unconscious Processes in Consumer Choice and Decision Making

Chair: Robert S. Wyer, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology

Discussion Leader: Dipankar Chakravarti, University of Colorado

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Joel Huber, Duke University
Tanya Chartrand, Ohio State University

About Prisoner's and Dictators: The Role of Subliminality Presented Stereotype Primes and Social Value Orientation in Shaping Cooperative Behavior

Dirk Smeesters, Tilburg University
Luk Warlop, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Vincent Yzerbyt, Université Catholique de Louvain
Olivier Corneille, Université Catholique de Louvain
Eddy van Avermaet, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Effects of Priming on Product Choices for the Self versus for Others

Jongwon Park, Korea University
Kyeongheiu Kim, University of Minnesota
Junsik Kwak, Korea University
Irene Blair, University of Colorado at Boulder

5.8 Special Session: When What I Think , Feel and Do Depends on Who I Am: Identity Effects on Judgment, Choice, and Self-Reinforcement

Chair: Americus Reed II, University of Pennsylvania
Discussion Leader: Sonya A. Grier, Stanford University

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Sticky Priors: Identity Effects on Judgment

Lisa Bolton, The Wharton School
Americus Reed, II, The Wharton School

Preference Reversals from Identity-Salience Shifts

Robyn A. LeBoeuf, University of Florida
Eldar Shafir, Princeton University

Identity Reinforcement: The Dynamic Effects of Evaluation on The Implicit Self Concept

Mark Forehand, University of Washington
Andrew Perkins, University of Washington
Americus Reed II, The Wharton School

5.9 Special Session: You Done Me Wrong (And That Ain't Right): The Role of Betrayal in Consumer Behavior

Chair: Andrew D. Gershoff, Columbia University
Discussion Leader: Raj Raghunathan, University of Texas, Austin

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

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 Yoshinori Fujikawa, Penn State University
 Keith E. Niedermeier, Penn State University
 William T. Ross Jr., Penn State University

Service Providers' Road to "Hell": Service Betrayal, Consequences and Recovery Attempts
 Linda Price, University of Nebraska
 Eric Arould, University of Nebraska
 Fleura Bardhi, University of Nebraska

Avoiding Betrayal Over Choosing Safety? The Moderating Effects of Type of Betrayal, Type of Choice, and Choosing for Others on Betrayal Aversion
 Andrew D. Gershoff, Columbia University
 Jonathan J. Koehler, University of Texas at Austin

5.10 Ferber Award Session

Christie Nordhielm, Northwestern University
 Joan Meyers-Levy, University of Minnesota
 Rebecca Hamilton, University of Maryland
 Drazen Prelec, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

SATURDAY
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SESSION 6
 10:30 A.M. –NOON

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Chair: Shailendra Pratap Jain, Indiana University

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 Rama K. Jayanti, Cleveland State University

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 Martin Eisend, Freie Universität Berlin

6.2 Special Session: Navigating Between Virtues and Vices: Moderators of Decisions Involving Hedonic versus Utilitarian Choices

Chair: Uzma Khan, Yale University
Oleg Urminsky, Columbia University
Discussion Leader: Drazen Prelec, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Ravi Dhar, Yale University
Uzma Khan, Yale University

Reconciling Impulsiveness with Self-Control: Explaining Differential Impatience toward Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption
Oleg Urminsky, Columbia University
Ran Kivetz, Columbia University

License to Sin: The Liberating Role of Reporting Expectations
Gavan J. Fitzsimons, Duke University
Joseph Nunes, University of Southern California
Patti Williams, University of Pennsylvania

6.3 Competitive Paper Session: Cultural Influences on Consumer Behavior

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Culture's Influence on Consumer Behaviors: Differences Among Ethnic Groups in a Multiracial Asian Country 366
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Ah Keng Kau, National University of Singapore

Examining Consumer Behavior in the Liberalized German Energy Market—The Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Willingness to Switch Public Utility Companies 373
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Klaus-Peter Wiedmann, University of Hanover
Markus Groth, The Australian Graduate School of Management, UNSW

6.4 *Competitive Paper Session: Brand Extension and Evolution*

Chair: Michael S. McCarthy, Miami University

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Chuan-Fong Shih, Wake Forest University	

6.5 *Special Session: A Deeper Look at Assortment*

Chair: Susan Broniarczyk, University of Virginia and University of Texas at Austin

Discussion Leader: Leigh McAlister, University of Texas

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Alexander Chernev, Northwestern University

Too Many Choices: The Effect of Assortment on Anticipated and Experienced Regret
Susan Broniarczyk, University of Virginia and University of Texas at Austin
Joseph Goodman, University of Texas at Austin
Jill Griffin, University of Texas at Austin
Leigh McAlister, University of Texas at Austin

The Influence of Assortment Structure on Perceived Variety and Consumption Quantities
Barbara E. Kahn, University of Pennsylvania
Brian Wansink, University of Illinois

6.6 *Roundtable: Mediation Analysis*

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Discussion Leaders: Dawn Iacobucci, Northwestern University
Adam Duhachek, Northwestern University

Participants: Pankaj Aggarwal Adam Duhachek
Tim Ambler Dawn Iacobucci
Yiorgos Bakamitsos Jim Oakley
Simona Botti Joe Priester
Frédéric F. Brunel

6.7 Special Session: The World According To Garp: The Influence of Lay Theories About Others on Consumer Judgment and Behavior

Chair: Gita V. Johar, Columbia University
Anirban Mukhopadhyay, Columbia University
Discussion Leader: Robert S. Wyer, Hong Kong University

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Apologies and Coupons to Resolve Consumer Complaints: How Appealing is Each to You Versus to Others?
Rebecca K. Ratner, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Claudia Kubowicz, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Seeing Choices in the Rejections of Others: Inferring Approach Motivation in Avoidance Motivated Decisions
Leif D. Nelson, New York University
Dale T. Miller, Stanford University

Where There Is a Will, Is There a Way? The Effect of Lay Theories of Self-Control on Goal Setting and Achievement
Anirban Mukhopadhyay, Columbia University
Gita V. Johar, Columbia University

6.8 Special Session: Consuming Cyborgs: Researching Posthuman Consumer Culture

Chair: Markus Giesler, York University
Alladi Venkatesh, University of California, Irvine
Discussion Leader: Robert Kozinets, Northwestern University

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Alladi Venkatesh, University of California, Irvine

Posthumanism and the Sciences of the Artificial: Some New Directions for the Epistemologies of Consumption
Alladi Venkatesh, University of California, Irvine

Consuming Cyborgs: Posthuman Consumer Culture and its Impact on the Conduct of Marketing
Markus Giesler, Kellogg School of Management

The Emergence of Virtual Commodities
Erik Davis, TechGnosis

6.9 Special Session: Advances in the Study of Creative Cognition in Consumer Behavior

Chair: James E. Burroughs, University of Virginia
Page Moreau, University of Colorado
Discussion Leader: Alice Isen, Cornell University

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 Darren Dahl, University of British Columbia
 Page Moreau, University of Colorado

Strategic Approach and the Degree of Novelty in New Idea Generation
 Thomas B. Ward, University of Alabama

Development of a Test of Metaphoric Thinking Ability and Initial Validation through a Creativity Experiment
 James E. Burroughs, University of Virginia
 David Glen Mick, University of Virginia

**SATURDAY
 OCTOBER 11, 2003**

**ACR
 LUNCHEON & BUSINESS MEETING
 NOON–1:45 P.M.**

**SATURDAY
 OCTOBER 11, 2003**

**SESSION 7
 2:00–3:30 P.M.**

7.1 Competitive Paper Session: Recreation, Sports, and Play

Chair: Brian Wansink, University of Illinois

Examining the Mediating Relationship of “Play” on Ritual Enduring Involvement 405
 Lee Phillip McGinnis, Washburn University
 James W. Gentry, University of Nebraska

Sex-Typing of Leisure Activities: A Test of Two Theories 412
 George M. Zinkhan, University of Georgia
 Penelope J. Prenshaw, Millsaps College
 Angeline Grace Close, University of Georgia/North Georgia College and State University

Assessing Motivations for Sports Volunteerism 420
 Paul Z. Wang, University of Technology, Sydney

7.2 Special Session: It Could Happen to Me: Risk Estimates and the Positivity/Negativity Bias

Chair: Nicholas Lurie, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 Discussion Leader: Geeta Menon, New York University

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It Could Happen to Me: Risk Estimates and the Positivity/Negativity Bias 426
 Nicholas Lurie, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Feeling Better or Staying Miserable: Why Self-Positivity
 Chien-Huang Lin, National Central University, Taiwan
 Ying-Ching Lin, National Chi Nan University
 Priya Raghurir, University of California at Berkeley

Risk Information: Truth and Consequences
 Punam Anand Keller, Dartmouth College
 Isaac M. Lipkus, Duke University Medical Center

The Effect of Making Risk Estimates on Consumer Preferences
 Nicholas Lurie, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 Michael Ranney, University of California at Berkeley

7.3 **Competitive Paper Session: Group Influence**

Chair: Terry Bristol, Arkansas State University

Do The Ones We Love Sometimes Hurt Us The Most: The Role of Relationship Norms on Consumers' Perception of Fairness and Brand Evaluations 430
 Pankaj Aggarwal, University of Toronto

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 Maria L. Cronley, Miami University

What is the Relation Between Culture and Desirable Responding? 434
 Ashok K. Lalwani, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
 Sharon Shavitt, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
 Timothy Johnson, University of Illinois, Chicago
 Jing Zhang University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

7.4 **Competitive Paper Session: Consumer Response across Types of Brands**

Chair: Nancy Upton, Suffolk University

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 Steve Hoeffler, University of North Carolina
 Min Zhao, University of North Carolina

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 Håvard Hansen, Norwegian School of Management
 Bendik M. Samuelson, Norwegian School of Management
 Bengt G. Lorentzen, Norwegian School of Management

7.5 **Special Session: The Influence of Cultural Thinking Styles on Evaluative Processes**

Chair: Kyoungmi Lee, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Sharon Shavitt, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Discussion Leader: Nancy Wong, Georgia Tech University

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The Influence of Cultural Thinking Styles on Evaluative Processes 451

Kyoungmi Lee, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Sharon Shavitt, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Cultural Moderators to Feelings of Ambivalence: When Intra- versus Inter-Personal Conflict Leads to Feelings of Evaluative Tension

Joseph R. Priester, University of Michigan
Kiwan Park, University of Michigan
Richard E. Petty, Ohio State University
Yu-Peng Wang, Shih Chien University
Kyu-Hyun Lee, Hannam University

The Role of Cultural Cognition in the Use of Contextual Cues in Product Quality Judgments

Kyoungmi Lee, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Sharon Shavitt, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Service Encounters and Emotions across Individuals and across Cultures

Alexander Fedorikhin, University of Southern California
Catherine Cole, University of Iowa

7.6 **Roundtable: Qualitative Data Analysis–Part I: Issues in Data Analysis**

Discussion Leaders: Eric Arnould, University of Nebraska
Melanie Wallendorf, University of Arizona

Participants:

Eric Arnould	Sidney Levy
Soren Askegaard	Chuck Mc Mellon
Fleura Bardhi	Risto Moisio
Nivein Behairy	Kuitinee Neuvasiit
Dan Cook	Jerry Olson
David Crockett	Cele Otnes
Benet Deburry-Spence	Mark Peterson
Jeff Durgee	Torsten Ringberg
Karen Fernandez	Andrea Scott
Deborah Heisley	John Sherry
Pam Hendeson	Maura Troester
Jun Kimra	Melanie Wallendorf
Robert Kozinets	Pete Webb
John Lastovicka	Christine Wright-Isak
Ada Leung	

7.7 **Special Session: Effects of Framing on Magnitude Perceptions of Price**

Chair: Vicki Morwitz, New York University
Manoj Thomas, New York University
Discussion Leader: Russell Winter, New York University

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Manoj Thomas, New York University
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The Pseudo-Sunk Cost Effect: How Varying Reward Levels Affects Prices in Alternative Currencies

Joseph Nunes, University of Southern California
Xavier Drèze, University of California

Price Partitioning: No One Likes Surprises

Joseph Redden, University of Pennsylvania
Gavan Fitzsimons, Duke University
Patti Williams, University of Pennsylvania

Penny Wise and Pound Foolish: The Left Digit Effect in Perceptual Responses to Multi-Digit Numbers

Manoj Thomas, New York University
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7.8 **Special Session: Memory Accessibility and Product Judgment**

Chair: Stijn M. J. van Osselaer, Erasmus University
Discussion Leader: Robert S. Wyer, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

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When Are Judgments Based on Product Benefits Versus Retrieval Ease?

Alice Tybout, Northwestern University
Brian Sternthal, Northwestern University
Prashant Malaviya, INSEAD
Georgios A. Bakamitsos, Dartmouth College
Se-Bum Park, Northwestern University

The Unbiasing Effect of Biasing Cues

Stijn M.J. van Osselaer, Erasmus University
Wouter Vanhouche, University of Florida

The Effect of Conceptual and Perceptual Fluency on Brand Evaluation

Angela Y. Lee, Northwestern University
Aparna Labroo, University of Chicago

7.9 Special Session: Diagnosing Identity: Exploring the Complex Relationship between Consumer Identities, Motivation, and Health-Related Behaviors

Chair: Sonya Grier, Stanford University
H. Rika Houston, California State University, Los Angeles
Discussion Leader: Americus Reed II, University of Pennsylvania

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The Motherhood Mandate: Gender, Identity, and Consumption in the Infertility Marketplace
H. Rika Houston, California State University, Los Angeles

Obesity: Government Definitions versus Self-Identity on Consumer Attitudes, Perceptions, and Behaviors
Michael Basil, University of Lethbridge
Edward W. Maibach, Porter Novelli

Identity as Motivation For A Non-Smoking Lifestyle: The Role of Cultural and Health Identity in Women's Smoking Behavior
Sonya Grier, Stanford University
Amy Marks, University of Cape Town

7.10 Competitive Paper Session: Consuming Places

Chair: Markus Giesler, Northwestern University

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Güliz Ger, Bilkent University
Baskin Yenicioğlu, Bilkent University

The Memetics of Transcendent Places 468
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Jon D. Morris, University of Florida
Sanghoon Lee, LG Ad Inc.

**SATURDAY
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**SESSION 8
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Chair: Laurie A. Meamber, George Mason University

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<i>Consumer Complaint Behavior: Do “Other Customers” Make a Difference?</i>	491
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8.2 Special Session: Regulatory Focus And Choice: Towards Unifying Emotional and Motivational Influences in Consumer Decision Making

Chair: Rik Pieters, Tilburg University
Discussion Leader: Hans Baumgartner, Pennsylvania State University

Ideals and Oughts and the Use of Feelings in Judgment
Michel Tuan Pham, Columbia University
Tamar Avnet, Columbia University

Self-Regulation Influences in Risky Choice
E. Tory Higgins, Columbia University
Scott Spiegel, Columbia University
Eric J. Johnson, Columbia University
Raghu Iyengar, Columbia University

Negative Returns of Positive Emotions: Effects of Pride and Self-Regulatory Goals on Repeat Purchase Decisions
Maria J. Louro, Tilburg University
Rik Pieters, Tilburg University
Marcel Zeelenberg, Tilburg University

8.3 **Competitive Paper Session: Effects of Culture and Gender**

Chair: Søren Askegaard, University of Southern Denmark

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8.4 **Competitive Paper Session: Methodological and Experimental Design Issues**

Chair: Alet C Erasmus, University of Pretoria

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8.5 **Special Session: The Impact on Preferences of Consumer Access to Information in Online Shopping Environments**

Chair: Donna L. Hoffman, Vanderbilt University

Discussion Leader: Patricia M. West, Ohio State University

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Fang Wan, Vanderbilt University

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Andrew D. Gershoff, Columbia University
Ashesh Mukherjee, McGill University
Anirban Mukhopadhyay, Columbia University

The Effects of Facilitating Access to Competitor Information on Consumer Preference

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Discussion Leaders: Eric Arnould, University of Nebraska
Melanie Wallendorf, University of Arizona

Participants:	Eric Arnould	Ada Leung
	Soren Askegaard	Sidney Levy
	Fleura Bardhi	Chuck Mc Mellon
	Nivein Behairy	Risto Moisio
	Dan Cook	Kuitinee Neuvasiit
	David Crockett	Jerry Olson
	Benet Deburry-Spence	Cele Otnes
	Jeff Durgee	Mark Peterson
	Karen Fernandez	Torsten Ringberg
	Deborah Heisley	Andrea Scott
	Pam Hendeson	John Sherry
	Jun Kimra	Maura Troester
	Robert Kozinets	Melanie Wallendorf
	John Lastovicka	Pete Webb
		Christine Wright-Isak

8.7 Special Session: Understanding the Evaluation of Future Events: The Impact of Psychological Characteristics Both of the Events and of the Evaluators

Chair: Jane E. J. Ebert, University of Minnesota
Discussion Leader: Daniel Read, London School of Economics

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Understanding the Evaluation of Future Events: The Impact of Psychological Characteristics Both of the Events and of the Evaluators 538

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Value from Highlighting Time-Appropriate Outcomes

Nidhi Agrawal, New York University
Yaacov Trope, New York University

The Motivational Force of Future Rewards: Differences between Explicit and Implicit Valuations for Future and Uncertain Rewards

Jane E. J. Ebert, University of Minnesota
Drazen Prelec, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Intelligence and Discounting

Shane Frederick, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

8.8 *Special Session: Implicit Measures of Consumer Judgments and Choice*

Chair: Andrew A. Mitchell, University of Toronto
Discussion Leader: Frank R. Kardes, University of Cincinnati

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Implicit Consumer Ethnocentrism—an Example of Dissociation between Explicit and Implicit Preference
Dominika Maison, University of Warsaw
Anthony G. Greenwald, University of Washington
Ralph H. Bruin, Medical Data Management Corp

The Relation between Implicit and Explicit Attitudes and Spontaneous Choice
Melanie A. Dempsey, University of Toronto
Andrew A. Mitchell, University of Toronto

Alternative Theoretical Positions on Implicit Attitudes
Paul M. Herr, University of Colorado
Andrew A. Mitchell, University of Toronto
Melanie A. Dempsey, University of Toronto

8.9 *Special Session: Consuming Television: Connectedness and Community in Broadcast Media*

Chair: Hope Jensen Schau, Temple University
Discussion Leader: Mary C. Gilly, University of California

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Exploring the Relationship between Television Program Connectedness and Social Network Dynamics
Cristel A. Russell, San Diego State University
Andrew Norman, Iowa State University

Bonding through Cultural Subversion: Consumers' Connectedness with The Simpsons
Mary Finley Wolfenbarger, California State University—Long Beach
Hope Jensen Schau, Temple University

If You Can't Find It, Create It: An Analysis of Consumer Engagement with Xena: Warrior Princess and the Creation of a Consumer-generated Subtext
Hope Jensen Schau, Temple University
Albert M. Muniz, DePaul University

8.10 Meet the Editor's

CHAIR: Dawn Iacobucci, *Journal of Consumer Research*,
Ruth Bolton, *Journal of Marketing*,
Joel Cohen, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*,
Dhruv Grewal, *Journal of Retailing*,
Joel Huber, *Marketing Science*,
Dilip Soman, *Journal of Economic Psychology*,
Dick Wittink, *Journal of Marketing Research*,
Robert Wyer, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*,
Sharon Shavitt, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 11, 2003**

**RECEPTION
6:00–8:00 P.M.**



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University of Toronto**

**SUNDAY
OCTOBER 12, 2003**

**JCR
POLICY BOARD MEETING
7:30 A.M. –12:30 P.M.**

**SUNDAY
OCTOBER 12, 2003**

SESSION 9
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Hanna Leipämaa, University of Vaasa	

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Julie R. Irwin, University of Texas, Austin

Discussion Leader: Baba Shiv, University of Iowa

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Are We the Good Guys?¹

Wes Hutchinson, University of Pennsylvania

Most of the time, most of us in this room believe that most of what we do is well-intended and has positive effects. Nevertheless, many of the problems in the world today are blamed on consumers and/or the companies that supply them with goods and services. Implicitly, these criticisms apply to us, the people who observe, theorize, and collect knowledge about consumers. So, last year when I began thinking about my presidential address, I posed the question to myself, “Are we the good guys?” As you might imagine, I still do not have a definitive answer, but I would like to share with you the results of my inquiry.

Introduction

First, let me refer you to the Bibliography of this essay, which contains some of the resources I found most interesting and informative. I do not refer to all of these here, but they provided much of the “food of thought” that led to the ideas that follow.

Second, let me provide a little personal background on the origins of the ideas that follow. In 1981, I joined the marketing faculty of the University of Florida with a degree in cognitive psychology, never having even taken a course on any business-related topic. So I was pretty naive and uninformed. However, by the end of my first year two observations had impressed themselves upon me: Consumers belonged to things called “segments,” and companies worked very hard to market products that consumers want. More precisely,

1. consumers are heterogeneous in their preferences, knowledge, and decision processes, and
2. consumers are powerful (relative to governments and large corporations).

These observations led to the conclusion:

3. If our markets and mass media are filled with junk, or environmentally damaging products, or culturally vacuous entertainment, it’s because we (collectively) want that stuff.

Finally, let me be clear about who the “we” in “Are we the good guys?” is meant to include. There are two possible reference groups:

1. consumers in industrialized nations (particularly the U.S.), and
2. consumer researchers (i.e., ACR members, JCR authors, etc.).

Each of these definitions offers a distinct and informative perspective on the question, and each group could be a “good guy” or a “bad guy.” Reflecting this, my “method of analysis” will be to examine all four possible answers to the question at hand: good/good, good/bad, bad/bad, and bad/good. For each possible answer,

which is better called an opinion, I will review the basic arguments supporting that opinion. The empirical evidence that I have collected, which demonstrates that at least some people find these arguments persuasive, is that they can be found spoken by at least one central character in a popular movie. These are perhaps not the most rigorous data available nor are they the most persuasive arguments, but they provide “stylized opinions” on the matter that I think are useful in the same way that economists frequently use “stylized facts” to develop analytic theories of market behavior. The four opinions are summarized in Exhibit 1.

Good/good

The first opinion is that consumers are indeed the good guys, and consumer researchers are good as well. This position might be called “The ACR Member’s View” because most of us adopt this viewpoint in our day to day lives, if nothing else, to reduce cognitive dissonance. We view ourselves as advocates of consumer welfare, and believe that our efforts contribute to the protection of consumers. Implicit in this view is the belief that consumers, in fact, need protection. Recently, this issue has come to the fore among economists and legal scholars in the debate on merits “paternalism” (see Camerer et al. 2003, and Thaler 2003). The reasoning is essentially that if the weight of behavioral research demonstrates that consumer decision making is easily biased, then it is ethically permissible, and possibly required, to take paternalistic actions that debias consumers, so long as they do not infringe on the rights of others.

This we-can-all-be-good-guys opinion was nicely summarized in the movie, *Heaven Can Wait*. Warren Beatty plays the role of Los Angeles Rams quarterback, Joe Pendleton, who an angel mistakenly takes “too soon” in an automobile accident. The angel’s supervisor steps in to fix the problem and find Joe a new body. Temporarily he is given the body of an amoral captain of industry, Leo Farnsworth. At one point in the movie, alerted to Farnsworth’s evils by love interest Julie Christie, Beatty invites the press into a board meeting and gives a rambling, jock-pep-talk speech. The board, believing he is Farnsworth, is incredulous. In the middle of his pep talk he discovers that Exo-Gray’s tuna cannery kills an occasional dolphin in their processing. He says:

“Why not do the right thing? Let the other guys kill dolphins fishing for tuna. We could even make that part of our advertising. ‘Pay an extra nickel and save a dolphin.’”

Good/bad

The second opinion is that consumers are the good guys, but consumer researchers are the bad guys. Essentially, this opinion holds that consumer researchers, in both academia and industry, serve the interests of corporate welfare rather than consumer welfare. This opinion tends to spawn conspiracy theories of various sorts that place human greed at the heart of the matter.

This opinion was nicely summarized, with a twist, in the movie, *Wall Street*. In *Wall Street*, Michael Douglas plays the role of Gordon Gekko, a ruthless corporate raider in the process of a hostile takeover. During a stockholders meeting, the paternalistic owner of Teldar Paper, Mr. Cromwell, brands Gekko as the epitome of Wall Street greediness. Gekko responds:

¹A slightly revised version of the presidential address delivered at the 2003 Conference of the Association for Consumer Research held in Toronto, Canada.

EXHIBIT 1

		CONSUMERS	
CONSUMER RESEARCHERS		Good	Bad
Good		<p><u>The ACR Member's View</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates of consumer welfare • Favorite Concepts: consumer protection, libertarian paternalism • Favorite Movie: <i>Heaven Can Wait</i> 	<p><u>Wes' Naive 1981 View</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates of raising a family, getting tenure, and not being wracked by guilt in the process • Favorite Concepts: consumer power, (willful?) ignorance • Favorite Movie: <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
	Bad	<p><u>The "Average" Citizen's View</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates of corporate welfare • Favorite Concepts: greed, conspiracy theories • Favorite Movie: <i>Wall Street</i> 	<p><u>The Third World View</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates of wealthy, western-style, free-market democracies • Favorite Concepts: imperialism, colonialism, nationalism, self-determination • Favorite Movie: <i>Ghandi</i>

“The point is, ladies and gentlemen, greed is good. Greed works, greed is right. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed in all its forms, greed for life, money, love, knowledge, has marked the upward surge of mankind—and greed, mark my words—will save not only Teldar Paper but that other malfunctioning corporation called the USA...Thank you.”

This echoes a much older view, that of Adam Smith (1776):

“The rich only select from the heap what is most precious and agreeable. They consume little more than the poor, and in spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity, though they mean only their conveniency, though the sole end which they propose from the labours of all the thousands whom they employ, be gratification of their own vain and insatiable desires, they divide with the poor the produce of all their improvements.”

The astute reader will note that these are both variations of the “bad is good” argument and essentially attempts to create a back door into the good/good cell of Exhibit 1. Clearly, there is much room for debate about whether the “invisible hand” that guides free markets and the hand of God indeed pull in the same direction, as Gekko and Smith suggest.

Bad/bad

The third opinion is that consumers are the bad guys, and consumer researchers are bad as well. Third world leaders and first world dissenters most often voice this opinion. Basically, the argument is that the whole system is merely the mechanism through which wealthy, western-style, free-market democracies maintain their self-centered world dominance. This viewpoint also tends to champion nationalism and self-determination, as the highest immediate goal for have-not countries.

This opinion was nicely summarized in the movie, *Ghandi*. Ben Kingsley plays the role of Mohandis Ghandi. At an early meeting of the Indian National Congress, he says:

“Here we make speeches for each other—and those English liberal magazines that may grant us a few lines. But the people of India are untouched. Their politics are confined to bread and salt. Illiterate they may be, but they are not blind. They see no reason to give their loyalty to rich and powerful men who simply want to take over the role of the British in the name of freedom.”

Later, he says: “Mr. Kinnoch, I beg you to accept that there is no people on earth who would not prefer their own bad government to the ‘good’ government of an alien power.”

Bad/good

The final opinion is that consumers are the bad guys, but consumer researchers are the good guys. This would appear to be an unlikely combination, but upon reflection I realized that this was exactly my naive opinion in 1981. It relies on my two initial observations: consumers (in triad countries, at least) are sufficiently powerful to get whatever goods and services they want, but they want a wide variety different things. Moreover, these different things are desired with little awareness of the consequences of having companies compete to provide them, and the consequences are often bad for others and sometimes for the consumers themselves.

This opinion was nicely summarized in the movie, *The Great Gatsby*. (Of course, F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel is the real source.) *The Great Gatsby* is a story told by an apparently impartial observer, Nick Carraway. He more or less plays our role as consumer researchers. The story is about Jay Gatsby in his quest to realize the American Dream of creating personal wealth and re-capturing the love of his youth, Daisy Buchanan, who is old money and married to old money, Tom Buchanan. Daisy kills Tom's lover in a hit-and-run accident. Tom tells his dead lover's husband that Gatsby was driving. The husband kills Gatsby and then himself. Daisy's crime is forever hidden. Nick meets Tom on the street and, to the reader, Nick passes judgment on Tom and Daisy.

"It was all very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then they retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they made... I shook hands with him; it seemed silly not to, for I felt suddenly as though I were talking to a child. Then he went into the jewelry store to buy a pearl necklace—or perhaps only a pair of cuff buttons—rid of my provincial squeamishness forever."

Are consumers powerful?

A key premise of the good/bad viewpoint is that consumers are sufficiently powerful to both take care of themselves and to make the world a better place, if they so desire. So what is the evidence that consumers are powerful?

Litigation—There are many government regulations designed specifically to empower and protect consumers. Moreover, individual and class action lawsuits provide ready mechanisms for consumers to exercise their power (e.g., hot coffee at McDonald's=\$2.9 million, but empty calories at McDonald's=\$0).

Bubbles—Coordinated surges in demand occasionally reveal the even greater power exerted when the typical heterogeneity in consumer preferences suddenly congeals into homogeneity. Spontaneous surges (e.g., tulips in Holland, white wine in the U.S. in the 70s, tech stocks in the 90s, etc.) appear to be more efficacious than those that are organized (e.g., buy American campaigns, green marketing, etc.).

Boycotts—Coordinated withdrawals of demand (e.g., buses in Birmingham, Nestle's infant formula, Procter and Gamble's stars-and-moon logo, South African companies in the 80s), or even the credible threat of such withdrawals, exert considerable force on large corporations.

More evidence is provided by the following "gedanken" experiment. What would happen if, starting tomorrow, everyone

increased their personal savings rate by cutting their "discretionary" spending? Most observers would agree that if the rate went from recent levels of 0%–4% (of disposable income) to 8%–12%, the economic health of the U.S. and the rest of the world would be greatly improved now and in the future. If, however, it became 25% to 50%, there would be a worldwide recession or depression. The reason for this dire prediction is because virtually all countries depend on high levels of U.S. consumer spending.

Now, is it possible for the savings rate to go to 50%? I maintain that the answer is "yes." My reasoning is simply an existence proof. At least one person has shown the ability to cut consumption and increase saving by a large amount—my father-in-law, for example. My father-in-law was a university professor who decided to move to the mountains of North Carolina—a beautiful and meditative locale (see Exhibit 2). He built a small, energy efficient dwelling (see Exhibit 3) and has been pretty happy with his dramatically lower rate of consumption. Therefore, such a change in consumer behavior is "possible." However, is it "likely?" Absolutely not. Why? Because not everyone is not like my father-in-law (i.e., consumer heterogeneity). Which is not to say that everyone should be like him, just that they could be if they chose to do so, and if they did the savings rate would skyrocket, among other outcomes.

The implication of my gedanken experiment is that consumers have a tremendous amount of potential power, but coordinated action is required to exert that power. In the absence of coordinated action, individuals have relatively little power. As a result, I offer the following conjecture, proposition, and corollary.

CONJECTURE: Consumers are powerful, but are relatively ignorant of their power—like a child playing with a loaded gun; therefore, it is only the heterogeneity of preferences, values, and beliefs that keeps this power in check.

PROPOSITION: Because people act like children, doesn't mean they deserve to be protected like children. Only the powerless deserve to be protected.

COROLLARY: The worst system is one that protects the powerful and leaves the powerless unprotected.

But that's so depressing...

True. However, there is an alternative spin. Consumers have the market power to achieve the broad social goals for which there is a surprising amount of consensus (at the abstract level, at least). Consumers only lack the willpower to achieve those goals.

Thus, I could change my representative movie for the bad/good cell of Exhibit 1 from *The Great Gatsby* to *Pay It Forward*. In *Pay It Forward*, Kevin Spacey plays Eugene Simonet, a social studies teacher who gives his class an assignment to come up with an idea that could change the world. Trevor, played by Haley Joel Osment, offers the following idea.

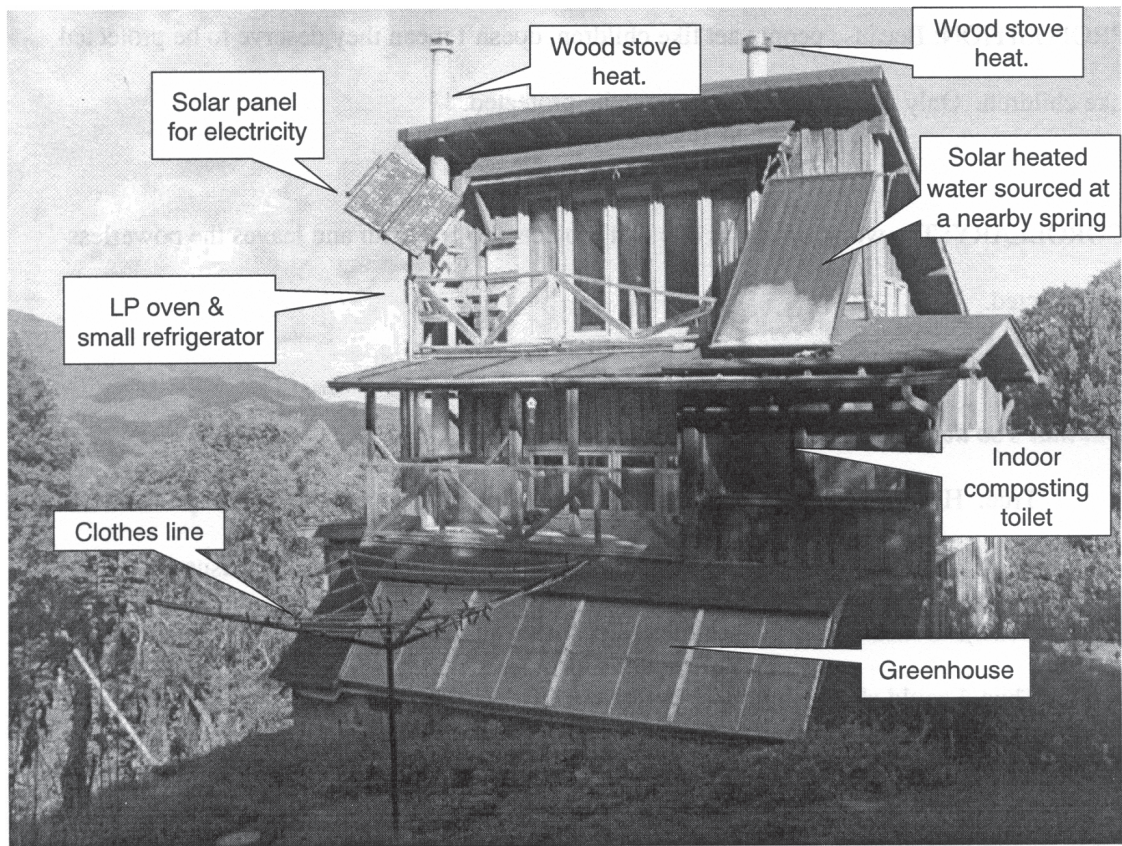
"If someone did you a favor, something big, something you couldn't do on your own, and instead of paying it back, you paid it forward to three people. And the next day they paid it forward to three more...and the day after that those people paid it forward to three more. And each day everyone in turn paid it forward to three more people. In two weeks, that comes to 4,782,969 people."

Even though "Pay It Forward" leaves us feeling a bit warmer and fuzzier about the bad/good opinion, it has an important implication. If consumers are powerful, then we—the people who observe, theorize, and collect knowledge about consumers—are

EXHIBIT 2



EXHIBIT 3



also powerful. And if consumer researchers are powerful, then Eugene Simonet's challenge to change the world should be as thought-and-action provoking for us as it was for his 6th grade social studies class.

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THE SECOND ANNUAL ACR FILM FESTIVAL

Russell Belk, University of Utah

Robert Kozinets, Northwestern University

The 2003 ACR Film Festival accepted 13 films by a variety of producers ranging from first time academic filmmakers to film school trained professionals. The films presented considerable diversity in their approaches to subject matter, ranging from abstract impressionistic films to talking head documentaries to travelogues. We were also pleased that three of these films were from Europe, two were from Asia, and eight were from North America. Besides the diversity of affiliations and geography, the films addressed an interesting variety of topics as the abstracts below attest.

This year we forsook the popcorn and moved the Film Festival to a daytime format running all-day Friday and Saturday. The daytime format was successful and we were also pleased to hear a number of references to the films during the paper sessions of the Conference. Each initial showing was followed by 15 minutes of question and answer with the filmmakers. We were delighted to see many lively and stimulating discussions during these periods. A second showing of each film took place on Saturday without the filmmaker interaction. We were assisted in running these sessions by a number of the filmmakers from this year's and last year's Festival and we greatly appreciate their help and involvement.

Prizes this year were to have gone to Gold, Silver, and Bronze award-winners based on People's Choice ballots submitted by film audiences. However, we had a pair of two-way ties and therefore awarded two Gold and two Silver awards as follows.

Gold Award: Christina Monnier and Charles Gulas, "American Odyssey"

Gold Award: David Toumajian and Gülnur Tumbat, "Toward a Meaningful Identity: The (F)Utility of Lifestyle Research"

Silver Award: Anders Bengtsson, Jacob Östberg, and Dannie Kjeldgaard, "The Embodied Brand"

Silver Award: Alain DeCrop, Olivier Cabossart, and Christian Derbaix, "Colors and Scarves: Symbolic Consumption By Soccer Fans"

Congratulations to the winners.

The first two years of the ACR Film Festival have been a very rewarding experience for us as organizers and we are gratified to see a variety of approaches being used. As a relatively new medium, film has tremendous possibilities to enlighten, expose, analyze, entertain, stimulate, and critique more effectively than other types of conference presentations. We encourage experimentation with a variety of approaches and techniques for the next Film Festival and are also in the process of issuing a call for entries in a special DVD issue of the journal *Consumption, Markets & Culture*. Leading consumer behavior texts have also picked up some of the films from the Festivals as supplements. And the *Journal of Consumer Research* has begun to include some streaming video as well as color photos with some of the articles on its web site. Such signs all suggest the growing interest in the potential of visual media and the lessening cost and growing accessibility of visual production technology.

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS OF FILMS

American Odyssey

Christina G. Monnier, Mansfield, Ohio

Charles S. Gulas, Wright State University

American Odyssey is an examination of the unique brand community that revolves around the bullet-shaped, recreational trailers manufactured by Airstream, Inc. The film is the culmination of approximately eighteen months of research. The background research took place in five states. Visits were made to trailer parks, RV rallies, the Airstream factory, and the archives of the Wally Byam Caravan Club International (WBCCI).

The primary data collection took place in two segments. In the first segment, interviews were conducted at two Airstream parks in Florida. Over the course of eight days, fifteen hours of interviews and verite footage were videotaped. In the second segment, an additional twenty-five hours of videotape were shot over a period of seventeen days while accompanying twenty-six Airstream owners on a caravan from Ohio to a week-long rally in Massachusetts. The forty hours of raw footage were ultimately edited to the thirty-four minutes presented in the finished film.

Brand Community

American Odyssey is the story of consumers who have chosen Airstream as a lifestyle. This lifestyle extends beyond the individual relationship with the brand and includes a brand community, the importance of which may supercede the relationship with the brand.

As the film shows, the WBCCI is Middle America on wheels. It is a mobile community, with shared consciousness and rituals, based on a particular brand and to some extent, models within the brand. Although all models of Airstream are welcome in WBCCI, this fact is not without controversy.

"That new motor home that we pointed out, the Land Yacht, which is a fiberglass, square-sided motor home is probably one of the great sources of controversy within the Wally Byam Caravan Club. For many members that is a sacrilege. That's not a product that Wally developed and it therefore ought not to be in the Wally Byam Caravan Club." Doug Pederson

“It used to be that an Airstream was an Airstream trailer. But now we’ve got all kinds of square boxes and vans and motor homes and everything else they call Airstreams.” George James.

The begrudging acceptance of the “boxes” may be due in part to a survival mentality. Some WBCCI members voice concern that dying members are not being adequately replaced. Also, since the self contained motor home is relatively easy to operate, compared to a large trailer, some look at these vehicles a method of extending their years of caravanning, when they can no longer cope with a trailer.

Product as Life Saver

For some, the Airstream represents a tool for staying vital. The product, and the brand community formed around it, is perceived as not only enhancing the lives of owners but also extending them.

“If you couldn’t tow an Airstream you’d probably move into town and deteriorate quicker.” Ted Covington.

“There’s people that have gone, lived, ten-fifteen years longer because of these vehicles.” George James.

Conclusion

Airstream owners are committed to the brand, and more importantly, to the brand community it represents. *American Odyssey* adds to the growing understanding of these brand communities as an important aspect of consumer behavior.

Colors and Scarves: Symbolic Consumption by Soccer Fans

Alain Decrop, University of Namur (FUNDP), Belgium

Olivier Cabossart, Catholic University of Mons (FUCAM), Belgium

Christian Derbaix, University of Mons (FUCAM), Belgium

Football (soccer) is the most popular sport in the world. In European countries, professional football is a big business, with clubs generating large turnovers and substantial profits. Merchandising today represents a substantial part of those incomes. In this paper, we investigate the reasons why merchandising is becoming so successful: why supporters are increasingly buying and consuming shirts, scarves or hats of their preferred colors. The focus is on football fans, i.e. supporters who are highly involved in their team, who support it intensively by attending most of its matches.

The general interest in sport consumption is recent in consumer research. More than any other, Holt’s (1995) study on the consumption behavior of baseball supporters is the seminal work in this field. Based on an interpretive in-depth investigation of baseball supporters of Chicago, he developed a typology of four streams of consumption: consumption as experience, consumption as integration, consumption as classification and consumption as play. Other papers have been written on more specific aspects of sport behavior (Branscombe & Wann, 1992; Wann & Schrader, 2000). However, the thrust of this literature has focused on a sociological interpretation of sport consumption (e.g. Guttman, 1978; King, 1997).

This video results from an effort to consider all possible sources in understanding the consumption of material possessions by soccer fans in a naturalistic interpretive perspective. We immersed ourselves in the football fan subculture in order to gain a better insight into the reasons and motives why people buy and consume football-related tangibles within and outside stadiums on game days and on other occasions. How and why fans come to buy those items? Where, when and how do they consume them? What are the motives for such a consumption? What are the values conferred to those items? This broad and deep understanding of the consumption of the material possessions by football fans extends our 2001 ACR paper (Derbaix, Decrop & Cabossart, 2001).

In the last four years, we interviewed more than 30 fans of the most popular Belgian, French and Spanish teams. In addition, we observed them on some game days and during other football-related activities such as bus journeys to the stadium, meetings, dinners or visits to their fan club. To know more about the context of fan behavior within and outside football stadiums, we attended about 50 matches of the Belgian, French and Spanish national competitions. Finally, we interviewed experts and fan shop managers and we collected secondary documents such as brochures, press articles, and web sites. All these data were analyzed through inductive thematic analysis in order to bring order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. The use of different settings, methods, data sources, and researchers in a triangulation process contributes to the trustworthiness of the findings presented in this videography.

Clips show that action and possession are strongly connected as far as football consumption is concerned. Football fans conspicuously show a lot of support to their teams by such overt behavior as singing, shouting and cheering but also through a lot of material merchandise: scarves, hats, shirts... These two elements are present in informants’ definition of the “good” football fan, which is characterized both by his/her material possessions, in which colors play a major role, and his/her actions: s/he is faithful and supports his/her team even in bad circumstances.

The consumption of football entails a lot of symbolism, which is often connected with colors and to the football-related items that are paraded by the fans. The good supporter’s paraphernalia involves an identification, integration, socialization, expression and sacralization process. To summarize the major emerging findings of this study in one sentence, we could say that football fans express their identification with one team as an integrated community during sacred sport moments. This is not far from Belk et al.’s (1991) pioneering work on sacred consumption: “Sports fanaticism can be seen to promote community identification and spirit, but also to separate family members with differing tastes. Just as sports fans see themselves as a unified community during sacred sports moments, so do gift exchangers, heirloom-passing generations, and collectors” (p.92). Moreover, propositions of this videography are in line with Guttman’s (1978) ideas of players as heroes, stadiums as temples and artifacts as sacred relics.

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Coyote Came: Spirituality and the American Desert

Xin Zhao, University of Utah

Janeen Arnold Costa, University of Utah

If the desert is holy, it is because it is a forgotten place that allows us to remember the sacred. Perhaps that is why every pilgrimage to the desert is a pilgrimage to the self. There is no place to hide, and so we are found.

Williams 1992

Throughout the American Southwest, consumers seek sacred experiences in the desert. A journey to the self, escape from the city, their jobs and everyday lives—these consumers cultivate a sense of place in the vast arid surroundings. Emotional bonding, rituals and invocations, the making and use of sacred objects, and the development of camaraderie or *communitas* all characterize their endeavors. This video explores the ways in which certain consumers approach and experience the desert of the American Southwest—a place they understand to be sacred.

The literature that informs our analysis is vast and multi-disciplinary, ranging from Durkheim's (1912/1965) sociological characterizations of the sacred and profane, to anthropology and cultural geography, where scholars have sought to understand the sense of place. Tuan's (1976) concept of *geo-piety*, and [van] Gennep's (1960) and Turner's (1969) explorations of rites of passage, *communitas*, and liminality or the liminoid, are all relevant. Finally, we are informed by Durkheim's (1897/1951) delineation of "anomie," by issues of identity as elaborated by such theorists as Giddens (1992), and especially by Foucault's (1976) concept of discourse. In our analysis, Western societal discourses of urban discontent, of the sacred and its various dimensions, and of the individual seeking escape, identity and empowerment, are all significant.

A century ago, Durkheim (1897/1951) first coined the term "anomie" to refer to feelings of marginalization and meaninglessness; today, *anomie* more broadly conveys a sense of alienation, conflict, disruption, and social absurdity. The feelings and motivations of the consumers we interviewed, read about and observed suggest they often feel a sense of *anomie* in the urban secular context. They seek and/or have found the meaningful opposite of these feelings in their sacred consumption experiences in the desert. Thus, displacement and powerlessness, along with a very real awareness of social constraints, hierarchy, and constricting obligations, precipitate this pursuit of the sacred.

The discourse of negative secularity is therefore opposed and complemented by the discourse of the sacred, within which our consumers encounter feelings of power, positive meaning, and spirituality. In this way, a third relevant societal discourse—that of Western individuality and freedom—comes to bear. It is through their own initiative, referred to in this context as "choosing a path," that the consumers in this study bring together and resolve the dialectically opposed discourses of the secular and the sacred. Through shared ceremonies and behaviors, our informants find others who are in search of the same spiritual feelings and experiences, and they develop a sense communion with other participants, with nature, and with the spirits of the Earth and of objects and living things around them.

Native American spirituality is a very significant part of the sacred Other that our consumers construct and experience. Information, ritual, and the use of sacred objects are drawn from Native American peoples of the Southwest, such as the Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, and Acoma. But the beliefs and sacred ways of the Lakota Sioux, Cherokee, Cheyenne, and other Native American Indian groups are also brought into play. The consumers purchase and use Hopi Kachinas, Zuni Fetishes, Navajo blankets and baskets, Acoma pottery, and Native American beads, crystals, dream-catchers and rattles. They buy books that describe and analyze Native American spiritual beliefs in great detail. In sweat lodges or *kivas*, they undergo rituals of purification using smoking sage and heat. Sometimes, it is Native Americans themselves who serve as role models, explaining how they and others have found spiritual fulfillment by bonding with their ancestral lands and contacting spirits through dreams and visions.

However, an individual is also free to choose from, and combine, other spiritual traditions, and guidance is provided by philosophies from Buddhism and Hinduism, to Christianity, from the vanished civilizations of the Toltec, Maya, and Aztecs, to Eastern practices of yoga and Ayurveda, and from European-based wizardry and witchcraft, to eclectic combinations involving astrology, shapeshifting, soul retrieval, and shamanism.

Clearly, the experiences of those who seek the sacred, and find it in the desert, are profound. Confronted with powerlessness, confusion, illness, or a sense of *anomie*, sacralization of the desert seems to provide many of these consumers with power, a sense of purpose and direction, and meaning in their lives. We believe that the emotional bonds they form with other participants, and with the desert itself, allow for escape from daily responsibilities and marginalization. In the course of their desert rituals and experiences, they enter a

liminal or liminoid phase, which serves to rejuvenate and empower them in preparation for return to their jobs and home life. Through on-going consumption of sacred objects, books about spiritual beliefs, seminars or lectures, and regular re-engagement with the desert itself and with co-participants, these consumers may even transform their daily lives into journeys of continual renewal and self-awareness.

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Empowerment and Exploitation: Gendered Production and Consumption in Rural Greece

Janeen Arnold Costa, University of Utah

Globalization alters socio-cultural patterns in many developing societies; men and women work in new ways, sometimes to fulfill changing consumption desires. Women in developing societies who bring money or valued purchases into the home may also experience improved status. This may be particularly true in a globalizing economy, where increased income enables the family to purchase new consumer goods. However, as suggested in this video, women in developing societies often find themselves still fulfilling traditional roles in both production and consumption.

Tourism is the most important economic development engine in Greece, driving both production and consumption. For the town of Sami on the island of Cephalonia, whose people and way of life are the primary subject of this video, tourism was just beginning to develop in the late 1970s. Most economic and social life in Sami followed “traditional” patterns. Men who remained on the island mainly worked in the fields, and fished or hunted; some worked in or owned one of the few stores, restaurants, coffeeshops, or other businesses. People consumed their own olive oil and sold any excess to others. Many men left to earn money abroad or in Greek cities. Considered to be an island of seafarers, Cephalonia produced sailors and ship captains, many of whom were gone for months or years at a time. Those who remained behind sometimes took on multiple job, as day laborers in construction, on local ferry boats, as waiters in restaurants, or in the fields of those who owned larger tracts of land.

Women labored at home, cooking, cleaning and caring for children. In a few cases, families would make a room or two available for rent to summer tourists, and women cared for these visitors as well, cleaned their rooms, laundered towels and sheets, and provided directions and information. Rarely, poor Cephalonian women worked alongside their husbands or female in the fields, a family-owned store or office. The presence of others was a safeguard against suggestions of impropriety, since women were seen as a source of danger to the family’s reputation. At all times, a woman was expected to act with humility and piety, not looking at or returning the gaze of men, dressing modestly.

Thus, the villages of Cephalonia in the late 1970s largely conformed to a world of gendered divisions, including property, production and consumption. Agricultural land, pasture animals and associated tools and machines, the coffeeshop, the church sanctuary and courtyard, and the public square were male spaces and objects. The home and its surrounding courtyard, household goods and the tools and implements for maintaining it were female.

In the nearly 25 years since this research began, Sami and Cephalonia have undergone remarkable change. Flights originating in other European countries now fly non-stop to Cephalonia, and the island is popular with Athenians. Sami’s quiet waterfront is now crowded with restaurants and shops. Tourists, visitors and residents lounge by the waterside, dine at restaurants, and frequent bars or discotheques. New stores have opened. Beautiful homes line the streets where sheds and run-down homes once stood. The beach, originally rocks and a dirt road, now sports pavement, trees, benches and white sand brought in by local businesses. New seaside hotels are equipped with swimming pools, tennis courts, bars, restaurants and gift shops.

New businesses employ both men and women in increasing numbers. Tourists serve as culture change agents by demanding consumer goods/services, and their possessions and apparent wealth often spur Cephalonians to open shops, bars and restaurants, to rent out apartments and rooms, and to find other tourist-related employment. The false separation of production and consumption is abandoned here. Tourists’ consumption spurs production, producers consume goods as they engage in production, and some local production supports expanded consumption.

At a deeper level, however, traditional gendered production and consumption responsibilities remain unchanged, with the notable exception that women are often called upon to work outside the home, in addition to continuing tasks within the home. Moreover, the jobs women undertake are in many ways an extension of their domestic roles. Working mostly in hotels, women serve breakfast and clean tables, change beds, wash bathrooms and gather laundry, sweep sidewalks and the terrazzo floors of halls and rented rooms.

The man is usually the proprietor of a family business, while women are absent or sit nearby. Other times, family businesses are owned and/or operated by both men and women. All over the island, where men used to work the cash register in tourist shops or the hotel desks, women are increasingly found in these positions. Yet, unless she is an immediate family member, a woman will not be given full control over cash or accounting.

In bars and discotheques, some young women dress in a new way, in tight skirts or pants and revealing tops—modesty, even disguise of a woman’s sexuality under layers of clothing, no longer prevail. Yet it appears that the apparent changes that might be reflected in such attire are again superficial. Island women are still reserved in their interactions with men, especially when no male relatives are present to guarantee their safety and honor. Men still see women as inherently sexual, and see themselves as unable to resist sexual temptation.

In the public, males and females maintain discreet spaces, grouping together with others of the same sex. Young women walk together; mothers, aunts and grandmothers sit and watch children play. As boys mature, they move from play to undisguised gazing at women. Yet they, too, cluster together, not approaching or interacting with young women.

Thus, working more and more outside the home, Greek women may feel empowered, bringing in critical income for their family's ever-increasing desires. Yet, Greek women have only expanded their roles as wives, mothers and, in some cases, as highly sexual beings for men to desire and to guard against. The Greek man, in turn, performs and protects, occupying the public space with male prowess and guarding the family's honor.

Flea Markets: A Journalist's Perspective, Scratching an Intellectual Itch

Orpheus Allison, Asheville, North Carolina

Bob Mahosky, Asheville, North Carolina

Ken Corn, Asheville, North Carolina

Flea markets have been features of the landscape for many different societies. They function as clothing stores, furniture stores, pharmacies, and general stores for a variety of social groups. They function as clubs, meeting halls, and entertainment centers, making them rich sources for economic analysis, social analysis and integration, education, and journalistic endeavors. Flea markets function as barometers of the social fabric: Showing signs of prosperity, trends, and tribulations. The low initial investment, for the seller and the wide variety of participants make these locations appealing for the new immigrant or the resident citizen as they realize their dreams.

Originally discussed at a reporter's roundtable in 1990 when the author was a participant in a journalism workshop on economics reporting, a precursor project called "Flea Markets: The Art of The Deal", was filmed and aired on WLOS Television, Asheville, North Carolina, in April 2001. The project reflected the popular interest in flea markets: Low costs, unique items, and a fun activity for everyone. It proved to be popular with the viewers and staff. Further exploration of the idea was shelved as the author assumed other responsibilities. In 2002 the author decided to refocus his work on his Master's degree program by exploring the larger issues raised in the preliminary program.

The concept was very simple. Create a program of short vignettes capable of standing in whole or in part, which could be used in a variety of media formats and structures as a commercial vehicle. Examples of this realization would be as short feature clips for use in television news and magazine shows, as a complete program supported by sponsors, or as individual commercials for sponsors of varied programming. It was to be first an entertainment and then an exploration of some of the larger issues of society present in front of the lens. Integrating the fields of entertainment and education within a structural framework that could generate new interest from first-time and long-time viewers became the goal.

The author chose to examine two flea markets in close proximity to his home in an attempt to discover inherent natures, dreams and ideas unfolding within the confines of concrete, dirt, and humanity.

Research for the project led the producer to the discovery of the unique and groundbreaking research done by the Consumer Behavior Odyssey in 1986. This project sought to document actual flea markets, their participants and their relationship to consumer behavior using videotape as one part of the data gathering. The follow up papers, poems, essays, and reflections are powerful indicators as to the caliber and quality of information available to the researcher. Drawing from experience gained as a working journalist this author sought and received approval to develop this idea into a final project for his degree.

This project draws on the experience the author gained working as a photojournalist in a variety of broadcast markets. Battling a broken ankle, Diabetes, vagaries of employment and minimal funds, the author was able to complete the project with a budget of less than \$1,000 dollars. In the process he learned much about capabilities available for minimal costs: Colleagues donated time to photograph some aspects of the project; permission to use portions of the raw data from his previous project, "The Art of the Deal"; and, editing sessions in the University of North Carolina Asheville Media Laboratories. It was a first time effort using non-linear editing systems.

Flea markets do provide a social platform for the learning of new skills, new ideas, and new information. They are witnesses to socialization efforts as people learn the skills for doing business. They also are the defenders and protectors of cultural traditions, information and Languages. In the United States there exist approximately 5,000 of these occasional markets. One estimate is that 100 million visits to them will be made in one year and these visits generate five billion dollars in annual sales. Around the world the flea market functions as neutral ground for learning. Noisy, colorful, and fanciful collections of the mundane items of everyday life can be seen. As cultures interact with one another in this one to one relationship the chance to communicate with other people finds real appeal. It is a chance for one culture to observe, interact, and incorporate knowledge and information from another in a one to one moment.

This concept is sellable. Many flea markets are destination points for visitors to a region. Being able to see local and regional culture, history, and entertainment makes these locations mines for further study. The realization provided by this author indicates that it is possible to link commercial material into an intellectually challenging form of entertainment. The idea is intended as an igniter for further insight into the relationships, knowledge, and understanding to be gained from a visit to the local flea market.

I Just Wanna Dance

Angela Hausman, University of Texas-Pan American

Classical dancers are among the 30-50 million unpaid performers entertaining us each year. Every year increasing numbers of consumers rely on an endless stream of performers willing to donate their time and talents to enrich our lives (Weiss, Holbrook, and Habich 2001). Yet, we know little of what motivates and sustains these performers, most of whom will never achieve commercial success and notoriety. In fact, ballet was not considered appropriate in the United States until Jackie Kennedy decreed it acceptable and many retain negative stereotypes of male dancers. For instance, a teenage boy admitted to being a closet dancer, who changed schools to hide his dancing career.

Ballet, as one teacher noted, forms the language of dance, while other modalities are simple dialects of this language. As expressed by Meamber and Venkatesh (1998), this symbolic language creates individual and collective meanings as the body becomes a consumable object revealing control over culturally acceptable modes of conduct. Thus, the stylized and controlled body movements characteristic of classical ballet reflect the gendered reality of our culture. According to Hanna (1988), classical ballet echoes the puritanical ethos that the body must be harnessed in the pursuit of economic goals and denied freedom in efforts to achieve moral justice.

In contrast, modern ballet reflects postmodern themes, like intolerance and equality. It provides a rich voice to marginalized elements of our society. Even the movements, freed from constraining tutus and pointe shoes, celebrate the suppleness and sensuousness of the body. Jazz and Tap dances have gained wider acceptance in commercial performances with their modern themes and celebration of existence. Reflecting more freedom of movement, these art forms are less reliant on making audiences think, in favor of getting audiences to feel. Interestingly, especially in the case of jazz, this freedom is earned through years spent in subjugation to the more controlled movements of ballet.

The process of becoming a dancer reflects Staw's (1981) notion of escalation of commitment in a venture where the chances of success are slim. From the thousands of little 3 year olds who steal the hearts of audiences, intense competition produces only a few serious dancers and few of these will ever experience commercial success. And what professional success they might achieve is very fleeting, as ballet careers are measured in years not decades. Michael Flatley, whose performance introduced this film, is now unable to even walk without pain, for instance. Dancers must carefully weigh this reduced professional tenure against alternative life choices.

So, why do dancers devote countless hours training for careers with so little prospect of success. The answer appears to be in culturally-defined notions of success, which are less reliant on ephemeral and superficial values. Modern definitions of success, according to Firat and Venkatesh (1995), rely heavily on a rational economic system that affords no emotional, symbolic, or spiritual relief to the consumer. These intrinsic rewards are powerful motivators, especially obvious in observed gifting behavior. Not only is self-gifting evident, but rewards one obtains through giving gifts of dance to others is portrayed. Through dance, the body becomes not just a celebration of self-identity, it becomes an instrument for community consumption. Gifting dance is also seen as a sacrifice made in exchange for the talent a dancer was given—a cycle of gifting. Family members also participate in this gifting ritual of simultaneous giving and receiving, such that the mutuality of giving and receiving becomes so enmeshed in the dancer's definition of self that it escalates their commitment to dance.

Despite Bourdieu's (1984) contention that pleasure and pain avoidance have become hallmarks of postmodern consumer society, dancers embrace pain and deprivation to stimulate emotional experiences associated with mastery of the body. Others embrace the challenge of doing something others find difficult. But these rewards have costs. Dance thus articulates the inter-subjective relations between participants and audience (Tamisari 2000), emphasizing the sacrifice of self with the aim of advancing the larger society.

Dancers spend increasing amounts of time taking classes and preparing for performances, termed recreational specialization (Scammon 1987). This specialization isolates dancers from non-dancing peers and encourages emulation of codes established by more experienced dancers and teachers. Within this culture, symbolic meaning merges with mundane consumption artifacts, producing emotional involvement that transcends objective reality. Self-sacrifices endured in perfecting their craft further sanctify objects by transferring value to achievement tools and manufactured articles, especially pictures and videos that commemorate the transformation from novice to professional. Thus, while used pointe shoes are unattractive to outsiders, they attain special meaning for dancers, who develop rituals around old pointe shoes that enact the transformation to sacredness (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1991).

By observing cultural evolution informing the commitment of dancers to their art and interrelations between them and sacred artifacts representing that commitment, we develop an understanding of escalating commitment that transcends the economic, rational reality presented by modernist interpreters. Gifting, rather than ego-maintenance and sunk costs, create rationales for escalation in the absence of clear economic rewards. The study also highlights the importance of self-sacrifice, rather than impulsive hedonism in driving consumption. Concepts developed in this study enlighten understandings of similar pursuits, including such economically questionable activities as swimming and educational endeavors, like social work.

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I'm an American Girl

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At 111 East Chicago, just off of Chicago's Magnificent Mile, in one of the priciest retail districts in the world stands American Girl Place, a doll store. The store is currently the centerpiece of a \$350 million brand empire owned by the American toy giant Mattel. The American Girl brand was launched by Pleasant Rowland, a teacher, reporter, and textbook author who had grown frustrated with girls' toy choices. Before selling it to Mattel, she built American Girl into a powerhouse brand. In the \$2.4 billion doll market, American Girl stands alone, commanding not only a fifteen percent market share but also incredible loyalty and respect.

The American Girl brand and the American Girl Place store present a range of fascinating topics for marketers interested in brands, in themed retail, and in community-market relations. This videography is based on an ongoing, multiperspectival, multiperson ethnographic team's invasion of the American Girl Place in downtown Chicago, and subsequent interviews with girls, mothers, grandmothers (and even some fathers) that the brand has deeply affected. Our film explores brand-related themes that emerge from this research, such as the deep involvement of the brand with both family history and personal needs and desires.

In the videography, we explore American Girl consumer experience with the brand to try to unpack how these successful brand connections have been made, and to help continue the important investigations of the role of brands in people's lives and experiences. The historical connection is a key attractor highlighted in the film. Each of the dolls—Kaya, Felicity, Josefina, Samantha, Addy, Kirsten, and Molly—is situated in a particular historical period, from 1764 to 1944. Each is backed by a rich narrative of books depicting their daily lives, their hopes, fears, and routines. The various dresses and accessories for each doll are meticulously tied into the stories and images presented in the books. The result is a detailed world unto itself, not unlike the detailed *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* universes.

We examine these brand connections through the eyes of several different consumers. One woman details the importance of dolls in her past, and ties this to a deep emotional connection to the American Girl brand and its narratives of "goodness." Two young girls discuss the historical connection of the dolls, and then demonstrate how they play with them. A young girl discusses her connection with the African-American Girl Addy, and talks about the stories her grandmother told her. Her mother then relates a family Christmas card she wrote based on the narrative world of Addy. A father shares his affection for a hippie American Girl doll he named "Flowergirl" and describes how its openness is the source of its appeal.

In the film, girls, mothers, grandmothers, and even fathers deploy the American Girl brand in a great and never-ending identity construction project. As people seek to understand themselves, others, what matters to them, and what they want in life, the rich narratives and many links to lived experiences and realities make the brand come alive with personal relevance. The film teaches us through the particulars of the American Girl brand that successful brands like this one offer intertextual hooks as well as a mirror into which people can look and see themselves. Meaningful brands offer consumers a rich and detailed set of meanings and images with which to play, and the conceptual space to play with them. Our film shows how different people look into the eyes of an American Girl doll, in different ways, in endless celebrations of individuality united, and see themselves.

Learning to Survive as a Consumer in Japan: Linguistic Illiteracy in a Cross-Cultural Setting

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Today's world of knowledge is an explosion of printed information, electronic writing, and a seemingly infinite store of interconnected words on a computer-based web. So, illiteracy, a person's inability to read the written word, must surely be a very debilitating condition. It is hard to imagine how a consumer could function, today, without the ability to read.

Is it possible to get by, to survive, to maintain a reasonable standard of living, when one is illiterate? We know that many functionally illiterate people in our own society somehow manage to do this. They have rules of thumb, coping strategies, and ways of taking shortcuts to the knowledge essential for survival.

But what if you take a fully literate consumer—literate, that is, in his or her own society—and immerse this person in a completely alien culture? A culture where the spoken language is different, the writing is different, and even the ways of buying and selling are sometimes different.

How would such a consumer survive in this cross-cultural setting? What coping strategies would this consumer use? What barriers would there be to this consumer's standard of living, or even quality of life?

The subject in this 38-minute, case-study video is linguistically illiterate. For the past year, he has been living in Osaka, Japan's second largest city. He is illiterate because—as a consumer socialized in a Western culture and now living by himself in Japan—he is unable to speak, read, or write in Japanese. When he picks up a packaged food in the grocery store, he cannot read the label. When a waitress hands him a menu, he cannot decipher his choices. When he visits the cinema, he cannot make out the posters, to decide which film to see. Many of the marketplace cues that he has learned to use back home, in his English-language world, are useless to him in Japan.

So, how are his mental models, developed as a consumer in his own culture, transferred to his Japanese living environment? How does he fill in the blanks, for decision-making purposes, when he encounters marketplace data written in Japanese? And are his consumption decisions different because he is illiterate?

We find some answers to these questions when the camera follows him as he initiates shopping trips which conclude with consumption occasions for some of his day-to-day shopping and consumption needs. What methods does he use to get by (without a Japanese interpreter) when buying groceries, traveling by train, opening a bank account, renting an apartment, eating at restaurants, and so forth?

The case study is introspective and the subject in the video talks about his thoughts and decision making, giving an insight into the processes of acculturation, learning, episodic and iconic memory formation, and coping strategies adopted, in the absence of familiar marketplace cues learned back home in his English-speaking world.

The film shows that this linguistically illiterate consumer, living in Japan, appears to have learnt to survive in his foreign environment. Problems which arose during his day-to-day consumption activities—withdrawing money, buying food, taking trains, eating out—were handled with a variety of coping strategies. Many of these were decision-making strategies learnt from being a consumer in his native Western culture. A transfer of skills, from one culture to another. They could be applied in a foreign culture because Japan is a modern society with a highly developed economy and sophisticated infrastructure. It is similar, in many ways, to North America, Europe, or Australia.

And what about cultural illiteracy? It would be hard to make the case that our linguistically illiterate consumer was also culturally illiterate—in a general sense. After all, throughout his life he has traveled to widely differing countries and cultural regions and knows several languages (though not Japanese). Also, he has experienced foreign cultures through the artifacts of those cultures in the Western countries where he has lived—Chinese restaurants, for example, in Vancouver, Sydney, or Düsseldorf.

But, in a specific sense, he is culturally illiterate in Japan. Because he cannot speak or read Japanese, he cannot know how the Japanese think, or reason, or form opinions and attitudes. He must operate at the fringe of understanding, using only certain cross-cultural commonalities that seem to work in every alien culture—politeness, self-control, deference, gratitude, and so on. Some of these can be expressed through body language and gestures, and some by knowing a handful of words or phrases in the local language.

So, a specific kind of cultural illiteracy combines with linguistic illiteracy, and results in one type of consumption illiteracy. The kind we have seen in this video. And the results of this are: limited interactions with the native non-English speakers, a reliance on the available infrastructure in order to function as a consumer, and, occasionally, relinquished consumption opportunities and buying decisions.

“My Home, My Comfort”: An Ethnography of the Fantasy Home Comfort

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Although the concept of comfort has long been empirically identified as a prevailing discourse involving a broad array of life values surrounding the home and the sense of homeyness, cultural research into these constructs is scant. The role of comfort in the building, maintaining, and sustaining of a symbolic home identity still remains unclear.

The present documentary is 54 minutes long. It is extracted from a pilot study exploring the ideas of comfort and its manifestation in the home sphere. Five in-depth interviews were conducted between the months of February and May, 2003, with long-term residents of Hong Kong in English and Cantonese. The use of group facilitation technique was also employed to better guide the informants from the objective imagery to the feeling state and to their elaboration of an ideal circumstance of home comfort. All the interviews were delivered at the informants' home. Other than the verbal narrative and conversation, drawings and projective tasks were also employed to complement the imagery of home comfort. The types of housing studied range from high-rise apartment buildings to suburban townhouses, with spaces ranging from 500 square feet public housing estate to privately owned housing of 400 square feet apartment, 1000 square feet apartment and 1800 square feet townhouse respectively. The informants come from a diverse socio-demographic background of age group, educational background, occupation and choice of residential districts.

I found that the idea of a home of comfort is often envisaged to lie somewhere between an abstract state of being and a concrete manifestation vested in a set of consumption objects. However, unlike the former diminutive depiction of single objects to decipher the symbolism in consumption objects, when home comfort is concerned, it is unexceptionally the ensemble of a constellation of consumption goods and their created atmosphere, style and harmony that the idea of home comfort is personified. The informants continuously juxtapose their ideal sought-after life values and the values embodied in their physical surroundings as a materialization of fantasies of self-fulfillment.

Interestingly, by probing the informants with the five senses, the researcher was able to facilitate the informants in visualizing their idea and relish of home comfort from an ineffable state of mind to the concrete and concentrated arrangement of various consumption goods to shape the overall design of interior space. Thus the idea of home comfort can be seen as a pendulum that swings between a constant adjustment between the different needs and desires, and the inevitable concession between the fastidiousness pursuit of one sense of comfort (e.g. visual imagery) and the crescendo of discomfort at the other level (e.g. the stress to maintain a visually harmonious display of interior space and objects)

By the same token, it is also through the extensive social comparison with other people's home and/or their experiences with the former residence that the informants are able to verbalize and articulate their desire and fantasy for a home of comfort. Emerging from the dialogues, home comfort is an ideal state that is always yet to be achieved and exist only when the ideal state of living conditions are realized. Moreover, to the informants, home comfort has largely to do with the anticipation of future events, either negative or positive, and the sense of security and satisfaction that is gained from the well-thought over management and preparation to tackle the incurred apprehension.

In the same vein of previous research, the perception home comfort does not merely encompass the pursuit of a physically perfect home interior, but rather follows the top-of-priority concerns of household harmony at the interpersonal level. Deeper levels of life values regarding intimacy, work-home separation and social-private boundary were also indicated by the informants in their conversation.

Themes of privacy, space and safety were often found to be the epitome of home-related values with significant impact in one's life. A majority of those interviewed also extended the conventional view of home “behind the closed doors” to include the exterior sphere of their residential environments, such as community and neighborhood into their overall scope of the territory. Evidently the consumption of home comfort does not stay with the interior sphere but also expands to the exterior frontier of surrounding neighborhood, scenic views and environmental conditions such as air quality, noise and closeness to the nature.

Contrary to treatments of home space as being split into a formal public sphere and a comfortable private sphere, ideas of home comfort were found to span this boundary. While it was often desired that there be a privatized retreat within the home, comfort was seen

to encompass both public and private spaces as well as to combine work and leisure aspects of life in an integral whole. Comfort was seen to occupy a large space within this three-dimensional characterization, such that seemingly paradoxical practices mirrored the similar oppositional underlying values such as freedom, independence and control.

Pretend It Like Beckham: Symbolic Consumption through Soccer Jerseys

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My previous film examined the loss of identity through the uniforms and numbers imposed on prisoners of Nazi concentration camps. This film examines an opposite phenomenon: the acquisition of identity through soccer uniforms and player numbers. I explore the meanings consumers project onto their soccer apparel.

It is often stated within the consumer behavior literature that the link between one's sense of self and one's possessions is powerful. Russell Belk (1988) has argued that possessions both build and reflect our identities. We derive a view of who we are (and who we were) from our possessions and we express ourselves through belongings (e.g., Wicklund and Gollwitzer 1982; Richins 1999; Solomon 1999). Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1982) assert that self-defining goals lead us to use symbols to define who we are, and that these symbols stand for the "capacity and readiness to behave and think in certain ways (p. 9)."

Through the interviews presented in the film, soccer players and fans discuss the meanings of their soccer shirts and the connections they feel to favorite teams and players through these possessions. Interviews were conducted in France and in Singapore (and one was conducted in Israel). Participants speak about the players they admire and the teams they support, and discuss how their shirts symbolize their feelings and project their allegiances to others.

Consumers strive for a strong congruence between self-image and the image of their clothing (Belk 1982; Solomon 1983), and they can also express their aspiration desires through their attire. The film strives to depict this aspiration through dialogue with interviewees and the interlacing of footage of recreational and professional players.

Respondents representing many ages, from as young as five to as old as 75, talk about the meanings held in their soccer shirts. Such topics as loyalty (e.g., continuing to support a team even when it performs poorly) and heroism are addressed in the film. Throughout, the beauty, passion and creativity that is the game of soccer is portrayed.

The Embodied Brand

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Jacob Östberg, Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden

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This video focuses on the boundaries between the sacred, non-commercial sphere of the tattoo culture and the profane, profit-maximizing sphere of the commercial world, and the experienced inappropriateness of mixing these two spheres. Through interviews with tattoo artists, who are heavily immersed in this particular sub-culture, both as heavily tattooed consumers and as producers, we will capture some perspectives on the increasingly popular use of brand symbols as imagery for tattooing.

The meanings that are associated with tattooing have changed over the past century (DeMello 2000). From being heavily associated with people on the margins of society, such as sailors and bikers, tattoo consumption has developed into a more mainstream phenomenon. People who get tattoos today are not necessarily doing so to symbolize affiliation with a certain subculture, but can instead do so with the purpose of symbolizing a specific event in their personal life history (cf. Velliquette 2000). Given that tattoo consumption has spread into a larger spectrum of consumers and is no longer limited to members of specific sub-cultures, a more heterogeneous imagery from which proper inscriptions on the body can be chosen has emerged. In the eclectic use of tattoo imagery, symbols from popular culture such as football clubs, cartoon characters, and rock bands are frequently occurring. Some consumers go as far as choosing the logotype of commercial brands, such as Apple, Atari, Intel, Fender, MTV, Pepsi-Cola, and Wrangler, as imagery for their tattoos. This use of brand symbols in body expressions provides instances of permanent and deliberate brand consumption with the potential function of expression of self-identity. The practice illustrates how consumers take brands to new contexts, in a sense attaching a signifier to a new signified (cf. Ritson 1999).

In the late modern age it has been claimed that individual identities have become reflexive articulations of imagined biographies (Giddens 1991). As such, identities have become fluid in that there is a constant rearticulation taking place. Bauman (2001) goes as far as claiming that the identity strategy of today is less about committing oneself to one identity than it is about keeping possibilities for identity change open. Within consumer research, it is a widely received view that brands and consumer goods enter into this construction and display of self-identity (e.g. Arnould and Price 2000; Fournier 1998; Kates 2000). The brands used in body expressions are unique since they enter into a more or less permanent display and articulation of self-identity.

Compared to non-commercial tattoo imagery, brand symbols are part of a marketing system where systematic meaning management seeks to impose intended interpretations on the consumers (Holt 2002). Therefore, brands can be thought of as symbols with a more controlled association base than other symbolic expressions. The meaning of a brand can be subject to unexpected change; for instance, a brand can suddenly be repositioned and become loaded with new meanings and associations making the expression of a certain consumer self-identity more fluid. When using brands in body expression the consumer thereby leaves part of the power to construct the meaning to the whims of marketing strategies.

The tattoo artists interviewed for this video heavily opposed the use of commercial brand symbols as imagery for tattoos. In their view, the sphere of tattooing is infused with an ethos of outsidership that should be kept separate from commercial sphere. However, in trying to explain the relationship between the two spheres they could not escape the discursive logic of the commercial sphere. They hence willingly provided their services to consumers wanting to permanently mark their flesh with a brand symbol and regarded these consumers as "a dollar bill". In the tattoo artists' views, a brand symbol can not take on sacred meanings for the consumers. Therefore, it is not a pertinent symbol for body expressions in the way that, for instance, the portrait of a loved one can be.

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Tourist Photos: Signs of Self

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One goal of tourist photography is to collect pieces of self-narrative. Even when the avowed purpose of a shot is to show beauty or document unusual people and places, the tourist is the director/cinematographer who expresses or reveals. In this video I explore the types of stories we tell about ourselves as tourists by drawing on participant observation, interviews with travelers, and comparisons with non-traveling locals.

Tourist activities in the video include flights over Antarctica, photo safaris in Africa, Ankor Wat visits, and hula performances in Hawaii. Across these diverse settings I find considerable similarity in the types of photos and videos taken or made. Of the ethnographic narrative types identified by John van Maanen, tourist tales come closest to dramatic- and self-ethnographies. However, tourists are not careful ethnographers. They instead play the lead in stories that draw on myth, adventure, comedy, tragedy, and pilgrim's tales. They also invoke many conventions, stereotypes, and clichés in making images to tell their tales. Besides idealizing, romanticizing, and exoticizing their experiences, they select local scenery, costumes, actions, and props in the service of an Orientalizing discourse that makes the Other their polar opposite. Unlike T. S. Elliot's traveler who returns home to "know the place for the first time," we seek to know or transform ourselves via tourist photography.

The photos made by tourists are partly a mnemonic aid and souvenir for recalling travel experiences, but they are also used in the service of ennobling the self and gaining bragging rights to the cultural capital of apparent familiarity with the exotic. That is, tourism, even by these potentially jaded global tourists, is an extraordinary event that is seen to open portals to an extraordinary ideal self. Human memory, together with selective photography and videography, gradually replace or omit dreary and embarrassing details. We choose not to photograph the mechanisms that ease and facilitate our encounters, such as tourist buses, souvenir sellers, guides, and amenities that make the less affluent world more like home. We polish the memories of our experiences through the telling of tales that are more consistent with the selves we would like to become. In the process we furnish ourselves with a meaningful past—at least as we anticipate enjoying our future reflections on our accumulated photographic artifacts.

Nevertheless, apart from their photography and sight-seeing, the international tourists studied are relatively passive posers in the scenes and activities they portray. In contrast, local spectacles are relatively devoid of photography and locals often play a more active role than the tourists. We don't tend to regard that which happens in our own back yard as being capable of revealing or creating a transformed ideal self.

Much has been written about the invasive, distancing, and acquisitive nature of tourist photography and its use to hide our guilt and unease as vacationers. The ways in which tourists apprehend the people and places they encounter via a camera is not the same as it would be without looking through a lens. The camera is a buffer that also keeps them from experiencing the scene that confronts them. While acknowledging these negatives, I also find benefits in touristic photo rituals involving emplaced meaning making, prospective memory making, mastery of the incomprehensible, and expression of the ineffable. Tourist photography enhances our life narratives even as it creates fictions that construct the Self vis-à-vis the Other.

Towards a Meaningful Identity: The (F)Utility of Lifestyle Research

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Introduction

As Featherstone (1987) puts it "The term [lifestyle] ... connotes individuality, self-expression, and a stylistic self-consciousness" (p.55). Lifestyle research is one of the aspects of the movement towards a "postmodern consumer culture" in which there are no fixed status groups. In consumer research, postmodern approaches usually regard lifestyles as autonomous playful spaces beyond any determination.

According to Murray (2002), such theoretical accounts of conscious identity construction so prevalent in our field today are neglecting to give attention to broader social discourses and how our identity projects may have core structural components (i.e. *sign experimentation* vs. *sign domination*).

In the next section, we will provide a brief overview of lifestyle research followed by a presentation of the video. We will conclude with some implications.

Lifestyle Research: An Overview

Social consumption patterns are important in marketing since they form the basis of segmentation strategies (Solomon, Bamossy and Askegaard, 1999). The so-called lifestyle concept is one of the widely used concepts in marketing practices in which psychographic techniques attempt to classify consumers in terms of psychological subjective variables in addition to observable characteristics (see Veal 1993 for a review and Holt 1997 for a critical summary). One example of research using psychographics is the List of Values (LOV) developed by Kahle and Homer (1986). LOV uses a simple and quick survey in order to ascertain informants' most important value (from a list of 9) and seeks to formulate buying patterns based on this limited information:

The List of Values

- Sense of belonging (to be accepted and needed by your family, friends, and community);
- Excitement (to experience stimulation and thrills)
- Warm relationships with Others (to have close companionships and intimate friendships)
- Self-Fulfillment (to find peace of mind and to make the best use of your talents)
- Being well-respected (to be admired by others and to receive recognition)
- Fun and Enjoyment in Life (to lead a pleasurable happy life)
- Security (to be safe and protected from misfortune and attack)
- Self-Respect (to be proud of yourself and confident with who you are)
- A Sense of Accomplishment (to succeed at what you want to do)

In his poststructuralist approach to lifestyle research, Holt (1997) argues that meanings are always socially constructed in association with other cultural objects and activities. Meanings are unstable and consumption patterns depend upon contextual characteristics and they are expressed through regularities in consumption practices, rather than in consumer objects themselves. Here practices refer to "...how consumers understand, evaluate, appreciate, and use consumption objects in particular contexts" (p.334). He further argues that lifestyles are created by relational differences between consumption patterns and he refers to these differences as a type of symbolic boundary. Consumption patterns are meaningful to the extent that they exist in opposition to comparable alternatives. He argues that symbolic boundary approach enhances our understanding of lifestyles since it enables to see consumption patterns as expressions of collectivities rather than cluster of individuals. This approach provides a theoretical linkage between lifestyle categories and the social, economic, political, historical, and technological environments.

Lifestyles marketing research is but one of any number of lines of inquiry in marketing that, in the name of efficiency and predictability, seeks to develop universal theories of humanity entirely devoid of any cultural emphasis or understanding. Our video hence is a parody of sort seeking to emphasize the limited kind of the knowledge we can gain through psychographically defined populations or subpopulations. The subject, an anthropomorphized golf ball branded with the American flag, in discovering itself alone and abandoned, begins a quest to discover its own humanity (akin to Camus' *Sisyphus* or *The Stranger*). Initially seeking to use psychographic models it finds in a similarly (and conveniently) abandoned marketing textbook as a guide, this quickly proves futile. Rolling along to a café, the golf ball interviews people and asks them for clues in its identity quest only to be terribly disappointed with the supposed persona attributed to it. This resistance to the ascribed traits it "should" have then eventually lead to the development of a voice, a social identity driven by emancipatory concerns.

Moral and Managerial Mandates of Marketing Research

As researchers select and justify a concrete problem, they must reflect on the trade-offs between certain gains and certain losses in terms of the overall improvement of the human condition. (Murray et al. 1994, p. 564)

There are a number of problems with psychographics and lifestyle research, but perhaps one of the most profound is its refusal to problematize the relationship between "values" and consumer goods. There is no room in such an approach for the everyday struggles, frustrations, and desires that keep us bound to an endless cycle of consumption in order to achieve an idealized self, no mention of the interplay between the socio-cultural and life-worlds in theorizing where these values come from and how relative they are to different cultures and traditions, and there is a heavy bias towards developing a theory that can make concrete contributions to the applied-side of marketing rather than focusing on how a consumerist ethos impacts not only the individual psyche but also the world.

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Belief Bracketing: Can Partitioning Information Change Consumer Judgments?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

When evaluating a product or service, consumers seek out information to judge whether that specific product will meet certain needs. As consumers gather such information, marketers choose how much information to provide at any one time. Consider, for example, a consumer forming a judgment about a restaurant who sees reviews one or two at a time, as compared to seeing a dozen all at once. Is it possible that breaking information into smaller or larger partitions has an effect on beliefs about the product under consideration? In other words, can presenting information in broad versus narrow brackets influence product assessment? This question motivates the research presented here.

When consumers use information to form beliefs about the probability that a product will meet a specific need, the normative standard is Bayesian updating (e.g., Hagerty and Aaker 1984). There has been considerable testing of whether individuals obey Bayesian updating in forming both probability judgments and product judgments. Findings suggest that individuals use averaging models to integrate new information (Anderson 1981), that inappropriate attention is given to the credibility of the source (Birnbaum and Mellers 1983), and that non-diagnostic information weakens beliefs (Troutman and Shanteau 1976, Fischhoff and Beyth-Marom 1983). Failure to attend to source credibility has also been studied in the context of using consumer agents for recommendations (Gershoff, Broniarczyk, and West 2001), and influence of nondiagnostic information has been assessed in how consumers treat irrelevant product information (Simonson, Carmon, and O'Curry 1994). However, unlike these studies in which information varies in usefulness or credibility, we consider information that is diagnostic and relevant. Our main emphasis is not on the type of information being provided, but on how the bracketing of that information affects judgment.

The influence of bracketing is well-documented in choice (Read, Loewenstein, and Rabin 1999). Choice bracketing effects exploit gain/loss asymmetry (Kahneman and Tversky 1979) and decision makers' myopia (Kahneman and Lovallo 1992). Bracketing effects are less well-documented in judgment. One exception is the work of Ariely and Zauberman (2000, 2003), who find that breaking a hedonic experience into partitions dampens overall satisfaction, with broader brackets producing more extreme evaluations. Both choice bracketing and satisfaction partitioning effects result from a lack of information aggregation. Decision makers "miss the big picture", failing to see how individual pieces of information fit into a larger pattern. Although Ariely and Zauberman focus on satisfaction, we propose that bracketing affects other judgments.

Our prediction is that consumers observing information divided into multiple partitions will form different beliefs than when the information is viewed as a continuous whole. More specifically, we propose an *extremeness hypothesis*: final judgments will vary depending on the size of the partitions, with those formed under narrow brackets being judged less extreme than those formed under broad brackets. We formalize a model in which each information partition is observed and evaluated based on its level of representativeness. Small partitions (narrow brackets) will seem less representative, leading to less extreme judgments, while large partitions (broad brackets) will seem more representative, leading to more extreme judgments. This "bracketed" judgment is then

integrated into the overall judgment in a predictably biased way, due to unequal weight on the first and last partition-level judgments (primacy and recency effects). Thus, bracketing affects both information coding and integration. Although we expect that most sequences will be judged less extreme when observed in narrow brackets, we also expect an effect reversal for some sequences. More specifically, for sequences in which the initial and final partitions are particularly representative when observed under narrow bracketing, primacy and recency effects during integration may result in more extremeness in judgment.

To test these hypotheses, we conduct four studies that vary the number of partitions in which information is presented, and ask participants to make judgments regarding underlying characteristics of the product, service, or process being evaluated. Study 1 tests bracketing effects in the context of restaurant reviews. Subjects see restaurant reviews and judge which restaurants would appeal to a friend. We find that narrow brackets lead to less extreme judgments in the majority of cases. Analysis of partition-level judgments shows that primacy and recency operate during the integration process as proposed. Study 2 is identical to Study 1 except that there are no explicit judgments made by subjects after each partition. This tests whether on-line judgments are necessary for bracketing effects; based on evidence that individuals compulsively make judgments of information even when they are not required to (Russo, Meloy, and Medvec 1998), we predicted that the effect would persist. Our findings support this prediction; the results of Study 2 were not significantly changed from Study 1.

Study 3 more formally tests specific theoretical predictions. Participants judge the probability that a series of colored balls were drawn from one of two urns after seeing the series in brackets of one, two, or five balls at a time. Results again support the hypothesized effect of bracketing; probability judgments are typically more extreme when formed under broad brackets. However, as predicted, specific patterns produce the reverse effect, due to primacy and recency effects during integration. Study 4 is a complement to Study 3 to show representativeness' role in these effects. Participants judged the representativeness of the patterns of colored balls used in Study 3. Shorter patterns are judged to be less representative than longer patterns, as predicted. Analysis of these data in conjunction with the Study 3 data shows that these bracket-level representativeness judgments can explain the Study 3 results.

Although these studies vary in the use of memory (display of sequence history), when judgments are collected (on-line or retrospectively), and the type of judgment (product-specific or probability), the results of all four studies support the existence of belief bracketing effects. The overall finding is that judgments are more extreme for information delivered in broad brackets, as our model predicts. The findings also provide strong evidence for our proposed mechanisms of representativeness at encoding and primacy and recency during integration. In addition to the findings for judgment, we find bracketing effects for behavioral intentions (Studies 1 and 2) and for accuracy (Study 3), suggesting that the implications of bracketing go beyond judgment.

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Special Random Numbers: Beyond the Illusion of Control

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers wager approximately \$900 billion a year, two-thirds of which takes place in casinos (Seligman 2003). According to the National Gambling Impact Study Commission, 86% of Americans report having gambled in their lifetime and 68% have in the last year (Seligman 2003). Despite the random process of state lotteries, approximately 30% of lottery players choose their own numbers rather than have the computer pick the numbers for them (MUSL 2003). Similarly, the National Science Foundation reported that 60% of adults believe that some people possess psychic powers or extrasensory perception (Recer 2002). On average, 2.4 million consumers tune in to watch John Edward “cross over” into the land of the paranormal on his weekday television program. It is clear that (nonrandom) explanations for random events constitute big business. In addition, it is clear that some random systems, such as astrology and psychics, are more valued than others are.

Previous research (e.g., Langer 1975; Langer and Roth 1975; Wortman 1975) has shown that, when gambling (as in roulette), people prefer to bet on numbers that they picked themselves than to be assigned a random number by a system outside of their control. These numbers thus are special, researchers have argued, because people believe they have control over the outcome via their control over the numbers chosen. In this set of experiments we show that control is not as important a component of random number specialness as was previously suspected. We show this by manipulating task type; in some of our tasks, subjects are assigned the number by a complex personalized system (as is done with numerology, astrology, tarot cards, and other paranormal behavior). In other words, this personalized system gives them a “special random number” that they do not choose.

In the first set of experiments, all subjects gave their hypothetical bet for three roulette-type gambles (with order controlled). The number on which they could bet was generated by three different methods: (1) the number was randomly assigned, (2) the gamblers chose the number, and (3) the number was calculated via a personalized “numerology luck code.” All three gambles had the same objective probability of winning, and amount to win. Whereas the choice condition allowed subjects to have control over which number they chose to bet on, the numerology condition only allowed subjects to bet on a number calculated by their initials—a number (and letters) over which they presumably have no control. Subjects then rated their feelings of control, confidence, and enjoyment with their bet.

Both the choice and numerology conditions had significantly higher bets compared to the random condition. Furthermore, in a hierarchical model with all three ratings tasks (enjoyment, confidence, and control) predicting amount bet, feelings of enjoyment and confidence significantly predicted the increase in willingness to bet in the choice and numerology conditions but control did not.

A second set of experiments investigated which special random number systems (e.g., numerology) consumers prefer compared to a simple random number. A 2 (individual vs. not) X 2 (prevalent vs. not) + 1 (random) between-subject design tested whether preferences for the numerology condition were due to the individualness of the task and/or due to the similarity of the task to other prevalent personalized systems. We noticed that prevalent special random systems (e.g., numerology, astrology, Chinese horoscopes,

forecasting using one’s name, destiny numbers based on birthdates, etc.) are based either on one’s name or on particular days and months. The four conditions were: picking numbers individually out of a cup (individual, not prevalent), the subject’s own initials (individual, prevalent), the university initials (not individual, not prevalent) and the current month (not individual, prevalent).

Subjects were significantly more likely to indicate that they would bet in the prevalent conditions versus both the less prevalent and the random conditions. Specifically, subjects preferred to bet on numerology systems that were based on their own initials and the current month rather than systems based on their university or letters from a cup. The university and cup conditions were not statistically different from the random condition. The findings suggest that specialness of random numbers is confined to particular systems: namely, dates and initials. Consistent with the first set of studies, this study found that subjects enjoyed the prevalent gambles more and had more confidence in them, but the bet types did not differ in ratings of control. Furthermore, enjoyment seemed to fully drive the effect. A Sobel (1982) test found that enjoyment with the task significantly mediated the effect of the two conditions on subjects’ likelihood of betting. Neither confidence nor control showed this mediation effect.

This set of experiments has several implications. First, consistent with previous research, individuals prefer gambling systems in which they are able to choose their own numbers. But, this preference does not appear to be due to increased feelings of control. Even when people have no control, as in numerology, they find some numbers to be more special (and worthy of spending their money on) than others. For whatever reason, people like systems based on their name, and on dates. This finding is corroborated by all of the money spent on random psychic systems that follow one or both of these systems. Instead of control, the important factors appear to be confidence, and, especially enjoyment. People enjoy some random number systems more than they enjoy others, and this enjoyment translates to more spending. Future research can help disentangle whether names and dates are preferred because of cultural reasons (i.e., because more psychic systems in this culture revolve around them) or if there are deeper reasons for the preference. Intriguingly, in many cultures horoscopes, fortunes based on names, etc. are quite popular, suggesting the random numbers based on names and dates may for whatever reason be especially appealing to people in some primal way.

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Do Unto Others As You Would Do Unto Yourself: Variety-Seeking Motives In Gift Giving

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Is consumer variety-seeking behavior limited to one's own purchases, or might it also extend to purchases made for others? Prior research has provided considerable support for variety-seeking tendencies in purchase behavior (McAlister and Pessemier 1982; Ratner and Kahneman 1999). Researchers have also distinguished between variety seeking as an internal trait versus variety seeking triggered by external stimuli such as price promotions (Kahn and Louie 1990; Kahn and Raju 1991; van Trijp et al. 1996). More recently, researchers have also investigated the role of contextual variables (e.g., public vs. private decisions) in variety-seeking behavior (Ratner and Kahn 2002).

We focus here on variety seeking as a trait-like, individual-difference variable (Baumgartner and Steenkamp 1996; van Trijp et al. 1996). Several researchers have studied this variable in regard to individuals' own purchase behaviors. For example, van Trijp et al. (1996) find that the "intrinsic" variety-seeking trait interacts with product-level characteristics (e.g., hedonic vs. non-hedonic attributes) in determining whether consumers switch between brands or repeat purchase.

Notwithstanding, prior research has not explored whether a person's own variety-seeking trait might actually extend into buying products for others. We explore this issue in the context of gift decisions by investigating the composition and diversity of products (or lack thereof) in consumers' consideration sets. More specifically, the key issue in our research is the degree of product *heterogeneity* in a consideration set, i.e., the extent to which the choice alternatives in a consideration set span distinctly different product categories (Desai and Hoyer 2000; Johnson 1984; Ratneshwar et al. 1996).

The setting for our research is gifts bought online. We take into account in our theorizing the fact that online consumer decision-making processes are likely influenced by information presentation formats or "menus" that are unique to the Web (Haubl and Trifts 2000; Huffman and Kahn 1998; Lynch and Ariely 2000). A distinctive aspect of the Web environment is that it is possible for a retailer to make products available to the consumer in a *choice* of Web menu formats. The consumer can then go back and forth between these different menu formats while making an online purchase decision. Thus, for example, a consumer shopping for a gift online at *gifts.com* can browse through different product alternatives by clicking on menus that display only products in a specific category (e.g., only wristwatches), products in the same price range (e.g., diverse products from \$25 to \$50), products for a specific gift occasion (e.g., diverse products for a birthday), products for a specific gift recipient (e.g., diverse products for a brother), etc.

Further, the choice of a specific Web menu format (e.g., product-category based vs. non product-category based) should influence how consumers process information about different product alternatives. We expect that in general, product-category based Web menus should yield somewhat similar choice alternatives, thereby producing relatively homogenous consideration sets. In contrast, non product-category based Web menus (e.g., price-based, occasion-based, or recipient-based) should engender relatively dissimilar choice alternatives that cut across different product categories.

We propose that a high (vs. low) variety-seeking individual will be more motivated to improve his/her stimulation level by seeking novelty in the decision-making process (van Trijp et al. 1996). Further, this same individual will try to achieve an improved stimulation level even while buying gifts for others and thus might look for more variety in choice alternatives for stimulation. Consequently, such an individual will seek diverse choice alternatives by browsing different Web menus, especially non product-category based menus such as occasion- or recipient-based menus. Even if a high variety-seeking individual starts the search process with a product-category based menu, the need for variety and increased stimulation should eventually cause this person to switch to non product-category based menus. As a result, a high (vs. low) variety-seeking individual will be more likely to browse diverse product categories, which in turn is more likely to produce a heterogeneous consideration set.

Based on our theorizing, we examined in an online decision-making experiment the joint effects of variety seeking and gift buyer-recipient relationships on the composition of gift consideration sets. Subjects (N=83) shopped for products from actual e-tailer Web sites on the basis of hypothetical gift-giving scenarios. Individual differences in the variety-seeking trait were measured in a session two weeks prior to the main study. The results provide fairly consistent evidence that gift buyers project their intrinsic variety-seeking tendencies onto purchases made for others by considering a wider range of product categories as gifts. Variety seeking also interacts with the effects of distant (vs. close) relationships on the extent to which gift buyers consider heterogeneous product categories. For example, the variety-seeking trait seems to exert sufficient pressure so as to counteract the knowledge gift buyers likely have of gift recipients' specific product preferences (e.g., in the case of close relationships).

In sum, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to demonstrate that the variety-seeking trait might influence purchase behaviors beyond one's own self-consumption. Our study also extends literature in the area of two-stage choice models by demonstrating the role of variety seeking in producing consideration sets with heterogeneous product categories (i.e., across-category consideration). Implications, limitations, and future research directions are discussed.

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How Consumers Respond to Competing Market Signals: The Effects of Conflicting Quality Information and Consumer Thoughtfulness

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

To credibly communicate the quality of their products to consumers in markets where quality is unobservable, marketers often send quality signals. Instead of directly addressing a product's quality, signals provide information external to the product which consumers can use to make quality inferences (Bloom and Reve, 1990). Quality signals that have received attention in the marketing and economics literature include brand name (e.g., Price and Dawar, 2002), price (e.g., Rao and Monroe, 1989), advertising (e.g., Kilhlstrom and Riordan, 1984), retailer reputation (e.g., Purohit and Srivastava 2001), and warranties (e.g., Boulding and Kirmani 1993).

Signals, however, seldom operate in isolation. For example, a seller can send multiple simultaneous signals (*Dodge's 7-year, 70,000 mile warranty mixes the warranty and the Dodge brand name*), or different sellers can send different signals (e.g., Shop A's services may be certified by the American Automobile Association, AAA, whereas Shop B may offer a warranty). When confronted with multiple signals, consumers need to make relative quality assessments (if Shop A's certification is more / less credible than Shop B's warranty), assessments that are likely to be moderated by at least two issues: (1) the consumers' willingness and/or ability to think about the signals, and (2) their own information about the sellers' quality, in particular negative information, which may conflict with the expectation of good quality associated with signals in general. In the present paper, we report two studies that test these issues

In Study 1, participants imagine that their car needs transmission repairs and they have a choice of two repair shops, Shop A promising a warranty and Shop B promising AAA-certified services. The participants are asked to judge the service quality at the two shops on a modified 5-item version of the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et al., 1988), each item addressing a specific quality dimension: Tangibles (*The shop has up-to-date equipments*), Reliability (*The shop is dependable*), Responsiveness (*The shop's employees are always willing to help customers*), Assurance (*You can trust the employees at the shop*), and Empathy (*The shop gives you individual attention*). Following their assessment of service quality, participants are asked to judge the two signals on the following three criteria: (a) the dissipative nature (*to the extent the signal implies front-end investments in quality*; e.g., Rao, Qu and Ruekert, 1999), (b) vulnerability to losses in the case of false claims (*to the extent that the signal implies loss of money and reputation if the quality turns out to be bad*, e.g., Ippolito, 1990, Tirole, 1988; Wernerfelt, 1988) and (c) ease of renegeing by sellers (*to the extent the signal allows the seller to back out of the quality promise*, e.g., Price and Dawar, 2002).

The results show that, averaged across the five dimensions, the warranty and certification are judged comparable in signaling quality, but when compared on the individual dimensions, the certification scores significantly higher on tangibles. Consistent with its dissipative nature, certifications are associated with more investments in quality, although such investments do not translate into greater vulnerability, i.e., participants expect both shops to lose equally should their quality turn out to be bad. There is no difference between the two signals on the renegeing criterion as well (i.e.,

participants believe that it is equally easy for both shops to back out of their quality promise).

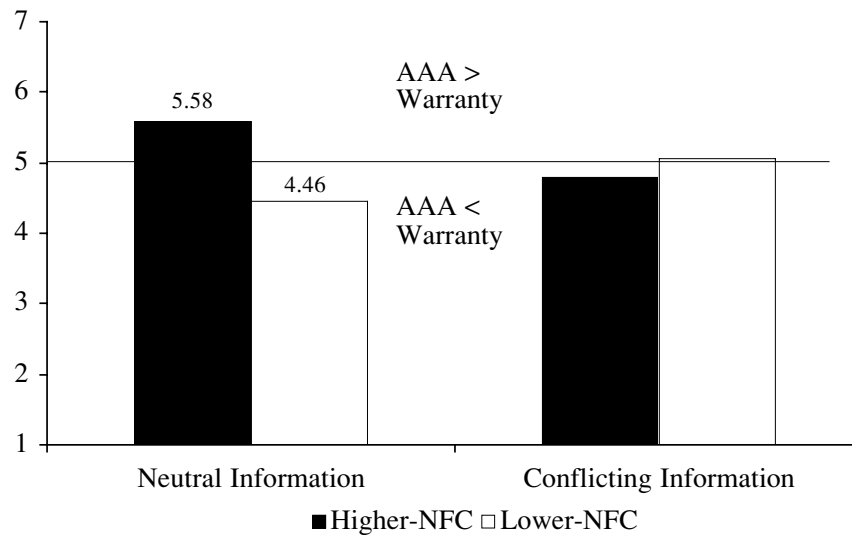
In Study 2, we use the same scenario as in Study 1 but (1) put our participants in a choice situation, (2) vary the nature of external quality information available to them, and (3) separately assess the responses of lower and higher-NFC participants. Thus, half of the participants are given neutral information about quality at the two shops (*the service quality at the two shops is not known, it may be good or bad*), while the other half of the participants are provided with conflicting quality information (*more than 80% of past customers have rated both shops as poor or very poor in quality*). We measure NFC by asking participants to self-rate themselves on the 18-item NFC scale (Cacioppo et al., 1984) and then create a composite NFC score for each participant by averaging the items. A median split of the average scores separates the lower and higher-NFC participants.

We assess likelihood of shop selection with two items: (1) What is the likelihood that one of the two shops will be your first choice, and (2) What is the likelihood that you will do more business with one of the two shops in future, on 9-point scales ranging from 1=Definitely Shop A to 9=Definitely Shop B. To account for alternative explanations, we control for (1) warranty coverage effects by manipulating the warranty coverage at two levels: low (6 months, parts and labor), and high (7 years, parts and labor; Price and Dawar, 2002), (2) familiarity with automobile services by explicitly assessing participants' familiarity with car repair shops on a 9-point Familiar / Unfamiliar scale, and (3) the underlying consumer motivation to seek gains or avoid losses (Higgins, 1997) by having participants self-select one of the following two options that best describes what is more important to them: *making sure that I get what is good for me*, versus *making sure that I avoid what is bad for me*.

The Figure shows the results. In neutral conditions when signals are the only information available in the market, higher-NFC participants are more likely to select the certified store compared to their lower-NFC counterparts. Testing the individual scores against indifference or 5.0 shows that higher-NFC participants significantly prefer the certification over the warranty, whereas lower-NFC participants significantly prefer the warranty over the certification. Introducing conflicting information equates the preferences of the two groups and makes both higher and lower-NFC participants indifferent between the two signals.

The results have several implications for sellers. At the simplest level, sellers need to realize that, in a competitive environment, signals will appeal differently to different segments stemming from the fact that a certain degree of cognitive sophistication is required for consumers to understand the quality implications. Furthermore, sellers should understand that signaling effects are moderated by any quality information that consumers may possess outside of the signals. It is critical therefore that sellers match their signals with the right quality communication. A certification signal, for example, should be accompanied by additional quality communications that stress front end investment in quality. Similarly, warranty signals could emphasize the sellers' contractual obligation (i.e., difficulty of renegeing) and, conditions permitting, promise unlimited or extended coverage.

FIGURE
External Information by NFC Interaction on Signal Preference



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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Feeling Badly Helps: Negative Affect and Giving Behavior

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The objective of this session is to explore the powerful influence of negative affect on prosocial or giving behavior in various marketing contexts. Each day, consumers contribute to charitable organizations, donate blood, and even risk their own life for the good of others. Such charitable behavior, we hypothesize, is often driven by negative affect. This session examines how empathic distress and guilt urge consumers to give. Empathic distress (Hoffman 2000) refers to negatively valenced empathy, which has shown a robust effect on motivating prosocial behavior (Batson 1991). Guilt, as a consequence of injustice perceptions, has been identified as an important factor in helping behavior (Blader and Tyler 2002).

The papers in this session demonstrate how these different types of negative affect influence consumer behavior, and suggest strategies that can be used to moderate that influence. Specifically, this session presents evidence of conditions under which giving behavior is strengthened by empathy or guilt, and examines alternative explanations for the phenomena described. All three papers illustrate that consumers often resort to giving behavior to reduce the aforementioned negative emotions. Collectively, the research in this session contributes to a better understanding of how negative affect involving others can be managed and provides practical implications to enhance marketing strategies.

Each paper in the session examines a unique facet of the relationship between negative affect and giving behavior. The first paper demonstrates how empathy can drive giving behavior. Small and Loewenstein, in a laboratory study and a field study, consistently show that mere identifiability of a victim can increase caring and donations to charity, via increased empathy. They further show that empathy exerts its influence on punitive behavior—people choose to punish those who do not give to others. The second and third papers focus on the influence of guilt. Strahilevitz shows that consumers feel guiltier about taking money back from a charity (even if they had not chosen to make the donation in the first place) than initially refusing to contribute to that same charity. Her research also examines the effect of whether or not the charity was initially chosen by the donor, and shows that the influence of guilt exists independently from the influence of status-quo bias. Lee and Corfman start from the assumption that hedonic purchases for purchasers themselves result in high guilt about spending money, and show how promotional strategies that restore equity can alleviate such guilt, such as including a free gift of a similar hedonic nature that will be given to someone other than the purchaser.

Whereas the first two presenters discuss how their results can be directly used to improve social marketing practices, the final paper focuses on how marketers can help alleviate consumer guilt in hedonic consumption by providing opportunities for them to give to others.

This session appeals to researchers interested in consumer decision making, charitable giving, promotional incentives, gift giving, and the causes and effects of experiencing and avoiding negative affect in consumer behavior.

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A Little Something for Me, and Maybe for You Too: Promotions that Relieve Guilt

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Kim P. Corfman, New York University

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Depending on the nature and the intended user of an item being considered for purchase, a consumer may experience feelings of guilt that discourage that purchase. The intensity of the guilt is highest when consumers contemplate purchasing hedonic or pleasurable products and services for themselves (vs. someone else), which are more likely than utilitarian or practical purchases to be considered unnecessary. We propose and demonstrate that this guilt can be reduced through the use of promotions that restore balances between hedonic vs. utilitarian and self vs. other consumption. This research builds on work that explores the affective role of promotions.

The literature on guilt defines the construct as mainly interpersonal and often resulting from a sense of advantageous inequity—getting more than one deserves compared to someone else or compared to an absolute standard. An obvious way to alleviate feelings of guilt is to restore equity by redistributing outcomes (Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton 1994). The guilt associated with the purchase of a hedonic product for oneself may result from a comparison with someone else—someone else's frugal behavior may induce feelings of guilt in someone contemplating the purchase of a luxury item—or it may be more budget-based or related to values of frugality or practicality. In the latter case, when a consumer contemplating a hedonic purchase feels guilt, it is due to a perceived imbalance between frugal or practical behavior and the self-indulgent behavior implied by the purchase. Consumers clearly vary in their feelings about the optimal balance between these kinds of behaviors and in their tolerance for engaging in more self-indulgent behavior than those around them. However, we propose that the feelings of guilt that do arise can be reduced. Past research suggests that this can be done by adding behaviors to the practical side of one's own scale. For example, Kivetz and Simonson (2002a; 2002b) found that consumers exerted effort to earn the right to indulge in luxury and by Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) found that subjects may have alleviated the feelings of guilt associated with a frivolous purchase by choosing to donate to charity. Another mechanism that reduces the guilt associated with such luxury or otherwise unnecessary purchases for oneself involves redistributing outcomes by giving to others, so that their hedonic consumption behavior is increased.

Marketers can help consumers make balance-restoring, guilt-reducing adjustments by offering free gifts with purchase. We predict that a free gift offered with the purchase of a hedonic product reduces feelings of guilt and that the degree to which guilt is reduced depends on both the intended user of the free gift and the nature of the gift: whether it is, itself, hedonic or utilitarian. First, we hypothesize that when the free gift is intended for use by the purchaser, guilt reduction is greater when the gift is utilitarian than when it is hedonic, because it helps restore the balance between self-indulgent and practical behaviors. Second, we hypothesize that guilt reduction is greater when the free gift is intended for use by someone else than by the purchasers themselves (e.g., the purchase of a bottle of women's perfume that comes with a tube of men's shaving cream). Giving something to someone else as well as to oneself helps correct the interpersonal balance. Finally, we hypothesize that when the free gift is intended for someone else, guilt reduction is greater when the gift is hedonic than when it is utilitarian (e.g., the bottle of women's perfume comes with men's cologne). Not only is the purchaser increasing someone else's

consumption level, the weight is all being placed on the hedonic side of the other party's scale.

Supporting the presence of guilt in consumer purchases, several pilot studies confirmed the association of stronger feelings of guilt with hedonic (vs. utilitarian) purchases for oneself and with free gifts intended for oneself (vs. for others). Generally, consumers feel guiltier about making hedonic than utilitarian purchases. Even within the realm of utilitarian purchases, consumers feel guilty about spending more money than necessary. Within hedonic purchases, consumers feel guiltier about buying a given hedonic item for themselves rather than for another.

In the main study, we focus on the situation in which there is the most guilt to alleviate—a hedonic purchase under consideration (the base product) for use by the purchaser. We employed a 2 (gift for purchaser vs. for someone else) \times 2 (hedonic vs. utilitarian gift) plus a control, between-subject design. Dependent measures were guilt and purchase intentions. Guilt was an index comprising six scales: reluctant, uneasy, hesitant, sorry, guilty, and regretful.

Results show that when a free gift is included, intentions to purchase the base product increase. This is not only because of perception of added value, but also because feelings of guilt are reduced, as demonstrated by a significant interaction within the free gift conditions. The pattern is such that when free gifts are explicitly intended for others, hedonic items reduce guilt more than utilitarian items, where as when the free gifts are explicitly intended for the purchaser, utilitarian items reduce guilt more than hedonic items. Purchase intentions followed a similar pattern, such that they increased when a free gift was included, but significantly more when hedonic gifts for others or utilitarian gifts for self were included. As predicted, guilt was a significant predictor of purchase intentions.

Guilt as a driving force in altruistic behavior has been examined in the literature, but not in the context of consumer purchases of hedonic products or promotions. This research provides insight into the ways in which consumers balance their consumption behaviors to reduce feelings of guilt and how promotions can be used to influence the feelings of guilt experienced by those who contemplate making hedonic purchases for themselves, by providing opportunities for giving to others.

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Affect Intensity, Gender and the Expression of Emotion in Response to Advertising Appeals

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ABSTRACT

The affect intensity measure (AIM) Larsen (1984) has been positioned primarily as a unidimensional construct measuring the characteristic strength with which people experience both positive and negative emotions (Larsen and Diener 1987). However, recent reexaminations of the factor structure of the AIM have demonstrated that people do not experience positive emotions with the same fundamental intensity as negative emotions (Weinfurt, Bryant and Yarnold 1994; Bryant, Yarnold and Grimm 1996). Since these findings seem to challenge Larsen's (1984) notion that the AIM is, in fact, a unidimensional construct, one of the objectives of this study is to reexamine the dimensions of the factors that comprise the AIM and to determine the manner in which these factors measure the intensity of positive and negative emotions.

Another relevant issue that has received insufficient attention in the consumer behavior literature is the role of gender with respect to affect intensity. A plethora of research has already shown that women characteristically score higher on measures of the intensity of both positive and negative emotions (Diener, Sandvik, and Larsen, 1985). Interestingly, Bryant, Yarnold and Grimm (1996), using a subset of 27 AIM items, found that women had higher scores on measures of negative reactivity, and were more emotionally reactive to negative stimuli than to positive stimuli. In contrast, men seemed to be more emotionally responsive to positive stimuli than to negative stimuli. The validity of these findings should be confirmed because of the critical implications for the relationship between affect and gender in the context of consumer behavior and advertising. Reviewing the empathy literature, Hoffman (1977) indicated that females do indeed appear to be more empathic than males, in that, they seem to be more adept at assessing another person's affective and cognitive perspective. However, Eisenberg and Lennon (1983) questioned these conclusions on the grounds that the presumed gender differences were actually a function of the method used to measure empathy. But even this conclusion by Eisenberg and Lennon (1983) seems to be implausible in light of the previous findings that indicate that females tend to express stronger emotionality than do men on the presumption that women are socialized to be more emotionally expressive (Brody and Hall 1993).

The questions facing researchers in consumer behavior and advertising are interesting. Previous research has shown that when consumers were exposed to emotionally charged advertising appeals, high affect intensity individuals, compared to their low intensity counterparts, manifested significantly stronger emotional responses to the message. In response to non-emotional ads, however, there were no significant differences in the strength of the emotions expressed by high versus low affect intensity respondents (Moore, Harris and Chen 1995). Moreover, what is still not clearly established is whether women will respond with stronger emotions and higher levels of affect intensity when exposed to emotionally charged advertising appeals. On the basis of prior research that has indicated that women do manifest significantly higher levels of affect intensity than do men (Diener, Sandvik and Larsen 1985; Bryant, Yarnold and Grimm 1996), there seems to be compelling theoretical justification to predict that gender may have an important influence in the determination of consumers' response to advertising appeals.

Objectives of the Study

One of the primary objectives of this paper is to investigate the relationship between gender and affect intensity, and the implications of this relationship for advertising and consumer behavior research. Study 1 examines the factor structure of the affect intensity measure and its relationship to gender. Study 2 investigates the extent to which affect intensity and gender influence the strength of the consumers' emotional response to emotional versus non-emotionally charged advertising appeals.

Subjects and Procedure

A total of 740 undergraduates (331 males and 409 females, aged 20-24) were administered the 40-item AIM (Larsen 1984). Each item was measured using a 6-point Likert-type scale (1=never, 2=almost never, 3=occasionally, 4=usually, 5=almost always, 6=always).

Data Analysis Procedure

The focus of the data analysis was a comparison of the model fitting capability and the factor structure of the 42 item AIM scale (Larsen 1984) versus the AIR three-factor model (Bryant et al. (1996). Using the method employed by Bryant et al. (1996), the same 27 items that comprised the AIR three-factor model were selected. Maximum-likelihood confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed on both the 42 item AIM scale as well as the 27 item model using LISREL 8.53 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989).

Results

Three consistent factor groupings emerged: positive affectivity, negative intensity and negative reactivity. These factors were highly consistent with what Bryant et al. (1996) called the Affect Intensity Reactivity model and have therefore demonstrated a high degree of test-retest reliability for the AIR model. Therefore, the 27 item three-factor version of the AIM scale may conceivably serve as a more efficient instrument for measuring the intensity of positive and negative human emotions.

Gender Differences. In this study women consistently scored higher than men on each of the three AIR factors. However, we did not find support for the notion that men are more emotionally reactive to positive events than to negative events.

STUDY 2

It is already known that women experience more intense emotions than men and display a greater tendency to seek out emotional experiences (Allen & Haccoun, 1976; Larsen & Diener, 1987). In the context of advertising, there is no conclusive evidence that affect intensity interacts with gender to influence the message recipient's emotions and attitudes.

Subjects and Design

Ninety one subjects participated in a mixed-model repeated measures ANOVA design. There were two grouping factors: (a) Affect Intensity: high and low; and (b) Gender: male and female. Type-of-ad (emotional vs. non-emotional) served as a within-factor. Three different ads were nested in each of the two ad type conditions thus making it a nested factor.

Results

In response to the emotional ads, women displayed significantly stronger empathic emotions than men, and were more willing to help the victims featured in the message appeals. No significant effects occurred for the non-emotional ads. There were no significant Affect Intensity x Gender interactions for most of the measures for the emotional ads.

The main effects for affect intensity is consistent with prior research in advertising (Moore, Harris and Chen 1995). It also supports Larsen's (1984) original work that demonstrated that when people are exposed to an affect producing stimulus, those who are temperamentally predisposed to experience their emotions with great intensity will consistently manifest these higher levels of emotions. However, when confronted with a non-emotional stimulus, these individual differences tend to disappear (Larsen, Diener and Cropanzano 1987).

In general, the fact that higher scores for women over men were most significantly associated with the Negative Reactivity factor in Study 1 raises several theoretical questions: For example, it seems possible that specific dimensions of emotional intensity may have greater power to activate a stronger response from women than from men and this underscores the need for more systematic research on gender differences in the marketplace.

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Undermining Self-regulation Ability as a Means of Reducing Resistance to Persuasion

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Resistance to persuasion depends both on features of the attitude under attack (e.g., its accessibility or importance) as well as characteristics of the message recipient (e.g., his or her motivation and ability to resist the persuasive appeal). Although much is known about characteristics of the attitude that make it more resistant to change, less is known about factors that influence individuals' ability to resist counterattitudinal messages. In particular, the extent to which engaging in counterargument requires and is influenced by self-regulatory ability has not yet been explored.

The most studied and most well understood means for resisting persuasion involves generating counterarguments. Contemporary research has identified a variety of individual and situational variables that can influence resistance to persuasion by affecting the generation of counterarguments. For example, people form more favorable attitudes when they are in a positive than in a neutral mood (Petty et al. 1993) and when the message is presented by a source of high rather than low credibility (Chaiken and Maheswaran 1994). In this research, we sought to identify a new variable, ego-depletion, that could, instead of serving as a cue or biasing factor, interfere with individuals' ability to resist weak and specious counterattitudinal messages.

Research on self-regulation suggests that self-regulatory ability is a finite resource that can be diminished with exertion (Muraven, Tice, and Baumeister 1998). This state has been called ego depletion. Engaging in tasks requiring self-regulation in one situation (e.g., resisting a tempting plate of chocolate chip cookies) can make it more difficult to subsequently complete a seemingly unrelated self-regulatory task (e.g., holding a hand grip for as long as possible). These types of tasks are proposed to be depleting because they require one to effortfully override one's initial or default responses (i.e., reaching for the cookie and letting go of the hand grip once it becomes difficult). Interestingly, these types of results are not due simply to the amount of effort required to complete the task. For example, avoiding thinking about a forbidden topic has been found to reduce subsequent self-regulatory ability, whereas solving equally challenging multiplication problems has not (Muraven et al. 1998).

Resisting persuasion is another type of task that could draw on limited self-regulatory resources, and therefore, resistance processes could be impaired by previous self-regulation tasks. Much work on self-regulation suggests self-regulation failure can increase acquiescence (Baumeister and Heatherton 1996), and acquiescence is often a passive and low-effort response strategy (Krosnick 1991). Counterarguing persuasive messages involves actively processing information in the message, retrieving or generating contradictory information, and applying it in order to refute the message. All of these processes require active control processes in order to defend the pre-existing attitude from attack. These processes meet the criteria used to identify processes involving self-regulation—specifically, they involve engaging processes to reach a desired state (Carver and Scheier 1998) and overcoming a default or natural tendency (i.e., to agree with the supported position; Baumeister 1996). If counterargument requires self-regulatory ability, then engaging in self-regulatory tasks that deplete such a resource should impair the ability of individuals to subsequently resist

counterattitudinal appeals. This should occur primarily in those conditions under which counterargument would normally occur, namely when the arguments fail to provide compelling support for the advocated position. The present research tested these hypotheses.

Participants engaged in an initial task designed to deplete or not deplete their regulatory resources. This task involved detecting the letter "e" on a page using a rule that was learned and habitual (i.e., crossing out every "e"; non-depleting) or using a different rule that required overruling previously established habits (i.e., crossing out only selected "e"s after practicing crossing out every "e"; depleting). Following the depletion manipulation, participants read a message in favor of a counterattitudinal policy. Within the message, argument quality was manipulated such that some participants read strong and compelling arguments and other participants read weak and specious arguments.

Results indicated that resistance to the message was lower among individuals who had previously engaged in the depleting self-regulation task, but only for the weak arguments condition. Cognitive responses showed the same pattern and mediated participants' attitude formation. Additional analyses showed that participants reported putting equal effort into reading the message. Furthermore, their perceptions of the difficulty of, enjoyability of, interestingness of, effort toward, and fatigue after the depletion task did not account for the results.

These findings suggest that engaging in counterargument requires self-regulatory resources and indicate that controlling attitude formation and resistance processes may draw on the same limited self-regulatory resources as other tasks involving willpower. Additionally, they point to a new means of altering the cognitive response profiles and attitudes of message recipients and lowering resistance to advertisements and persuasive messages. These effects occur primarily when arguments are weak and specious and are consistent with the notion that depletion of self-regulatory resources inhibits the ability to generate unfavorable cognitive responses to counterattitudinal messages.

These findings expand understanding of how situational factors can affect the generation of cognitive responses. Previous research has shown that factors such as distraction in the immediate environment or time pressure can interfere with the processing of persuasive messages. This research shows that, even when individuals are free to take their time to read persuasive messages in a non-distracting environment, they may still lack the ability to accurately assess the merit of and reject weak and specious arguments. Hence, the effects of situational variations may sometimes move beyond the immediate environment and carry over to subsequent ones.

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What Makes You Happier—A Nonloss or a Gain? The Moderating Role of Regulatory Focus and Need for Cognition

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Framing refers to equivalent but different descriptions of the same information (Tversky and Kahneman 1981). For instance, consider the case of a surcharge for paying by credit card rather than cash. The same situation can be framed as a loss (i.e., penalty for paying by credit card) or as a gain (i.e., discount for paying in cash). These two frames can lead to four framed outcomes—a loss (i.e., paying the penalty), a nonloss (i.e., avoiding the penalty), a gain (i.e., getting the discount), and a nongain (i.e., not getting the discount). While both a loss and a nongain represent negative outcomes of equal magnitude, a nonloss and a gain represent positive outcomes of the same magnitude.

The impact of such frames on individuals' affective experiences can be viewed from two different perspectives—one based on prospect theory and another based on regulatory focus theory. Regarding negative outcomes of equal magnitude, both perspectives make the same prediction—that negative affect evoked by a loss will be greater than that evoked by a nongain. As for positive outcomes of equal magnitude however, these two perspectives differ. While prospect theory predicts that the positive affect evoked by a nonloss will be greater than that evoked by a gain, regulatory focus theory predicts exactly the opposite. It is this discrepancy that we aim to resolve in this paper. We try to figure out what makes people happier—a nonloss or a gain?

According to prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky 1979), framing manipulations determine whether individuals will evaluate an outcome as a gain or a loss in relation to a reference point. Given that the loss portion of the prospect theory value function is steeper than the gain portion, the predictions that arise are that (1) for the same negative outcome, a loss feels worse than a nongain, and (2) for the same positive outcome, a nonloss feels better than a gain.

Regulatory focus theory (Higgins 1997, Idson et al. 2000) presents a different view of framing effects. According to this theory, a gain/nongain situation encourages a promotion focus, which in turn is likely to make a current goal seem like a *maximal* goal. In contrast, a loss/nonloss situation induces a prevention focus, which in turn is likely to make the same goal seem like a *minimal* goal. While minimal goals are those that one must achieve, maximal goals represent those that one aspires to achieve. Accordingly, failing to achieve a minimal goal (e.g., a loss) should be more aversive than failing to achieve a maximal goal (e.g., a nongain), whereas achieving a higher order maximal goal (e.g., a gain) should be more pleasurable than achieving a minimal goal (e.g., a nonloss). Notice that the latter prediction of gains being more pleasurable than nonlosses is the exact opposite of the prospect theory prediction.

In order to reconcile this discrepancy, we argue that one factor ignored by both theories is the regulatory focus that individuals have when they approach framed situations. We suggest that affect will be more positive when regulatory fit (Higgins 2000, Higgins et al. 2003) exists between individuals' regulatory focus, and the frame. Regulatory fit occurs when the strategic manner of one's goal pursuit is aligned with his or her regulatory orientation. Specifically, eagerness means fit a promotion focus and vigilance means fit a prevention focus. Accordingly, we propose that promotion focus individuals should experience fit when they encounter gain frames (i.e., eagerness means), whereas prevention focus individuals should experience fit when they encounter nonloss

frames (i.e., vigilance means). In terms of affect therefore, we should observe that gain frames lead to more favorable affect than nonloss frames (i.e., the regulatory focus theory prediction) when individuals adopt a promotion focus, but nonloss frames lead to more favorable affect than gain frames (i.e., the prospect theory prediction) when individuals adopt a prevention focus.

These effects should however hold only when individuals have the processing motivation required to perceive the fit/misfit. Research related to need for cognition (NFC) suggests that high NFC individuals, compared to low NFC individuals, are more sensitive to, and are more likely to elaborate on, the congruency/incongruency of information (Cacioppo and Petty 1982; Srull, Lichtenstein, and Rothbart 1985). Accordingly, high NFC people should be more sensitive to the level of fit between regulatory focus and frame, and exhibit such sensitivity in their affective judgments. Low NFC individuals, however, should be relatively immune to the differences in fit, and therefore exhibit comparable levels of affect. Specifically, we predict:

- H1: When individuals approach a frame with a *prevention* regulatory focus, those high in NFC should experience more positive affect for nonloss rather than gain frames. This difference in affect should however diminish for low NFC individuals.
- H2: When individuals approach a frame with a *promotion* regulatory focus, those high in NFC should experience more positive affect for gain rather than nonloss frames. This difference in affect should however diminish for low NFC individuals.

We use a series of scenario-based experiments to understand how regulatory focus might be induced in framed situations, and how this might have implications for affect. We first demonstrate (pretest 1) that buying situations induce a prevention focus whereas selling situations induce a promotion focus. Consequently (experiment 1), in support of our hypotheses, we observe an interesting reversal among high NFC participants, such that nonlosses produce more favorable affect than gains in buying situations, but gains produce more favorable affect than nonlosses in selling situations. This effect is absent among low NFC participants. We next replicate the buying situation results using a different scenario (pretest 2). Finally (experiment 2), we find further support for our theorizing by employing the same buying situation, but inducing a global, frame-unrelated regulatory focus before individuals actually see the frame.

Overall, our results demonstrate that, given adequate processing motivation, the prospect theory prediction (i.e., nonloss > gain) holds for prevention focus individuals and the regulatory focus theory prediction (i.e., gain > nonloss) holds for promotion focus individuals. This research presents insights into not only framing effects, but also the broader issue of how it is not only the ends, but also the means that matter.

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The Impact of NFC and Knowledge on Consumer Response Toward Complex Print Advertisements

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this era of high media clutter, advertisers frequently use a variety of ad-execution strategies to gain the attention of an increasingly fickle audience. One such strategy is to vary the level of complexity inherent in the message. To assess the efficacy of such a strategy, one needs to understand the impact of ad complexity on consumers. Research addressing this issue has generated mixed results; some find that simple ads are superior (Anderson and Jolson 1980; Paivio 1986; Rossiter and Percy 1983) while others find that complex messages are more effective (Chamblee et al. 1993; Lowrey 1998; Morrison and Dainoff 1972; Phillips 1997). This research attempts to reconcile such mixed findings by (a) isolating the various dimensions of message complexity and (b) studying the impact of two potential moderating variables, need for cognition (NFC) and knowledge, on consumer response toward complex messages.

The literature defines message complexity along four dimensions: visual complexity which refers to the number of distinct visual elements in the stimuli; technical complexity which refers to the amount of technical content and jargon used in the advertisement; lexical complexity which refers to the linguistic structure and semantic content of communications; and informational complexity which refers to the amount of product and/or usage information contained in the message.

Cacioppo and Petty (1982) define NFC as "the tendency for an individual to engage in and enjoy thinking." NFC could moderate the effectiveness of an advertisement through its influence on the preferred style and amount of processing. Consumers with high NFC derive intrinsic value from collecting information and obtain enjoyment from ads that are mentally stimulating. NFC may also be viewed as one determinant of a consumer's motivation to process information. i.e., high-NFC consumers are more likely to follow the ELM's central route to persuasion, forming attitudes on the basis of rational evaluation of message claims. Hence, such high-NFC consumers are likely to respond more favorably to messages that are complex along the dimensions noted above.

A knowledgeable consumer is one who has experience in a given context, possesses the ability to judge and evaluate product information and is more efficient in obtaining a given amount of information with less effort (Putrevu and Ratchford 1997). Researchers have found that knowledgeable consumers are equipped with the necessary skills or proficiencies to conduct in-depth processing of information (MacInnis et al. 1991). This superior ability might enable and motivate knowledgeable consumers to encode the rich cues embedded in complex messages. On the other hand, novice consumers might find the rich multitude of cues contained in complex messages to be confusing and overwhelming. Hence, knowledgeable consumers are likely to respond more favorably to complex ads containing a multitude of visual, technical, lexical, and informational cues.

The above predictions were tested on data obtained from a sample of 244 undergraduate students (53.7 percent male, 46.3 percent female) from a major Australian university. Subjects responded to fictitious ads for cars that varied along each of the four dimensions of ad complexity. Small (economy) cars were selected

as the target product because they were of relevance to the student population and also because of the product category's potential for variable positioning across the four types of complexity. Test ads were created for fictitious automobile brands to avoid potential confounds with prior preferences. Subjects were randomly assigned to treatment conditions. Each subject was exposed to a ten-page booklet containing a cover page, instruction page, four ads (two target and two filler ads) and four filler editorials. The target messages appeared third and sixth in each of the booklets; the order of the test ads (simple and complex versions of each dimension of ad complexity) and that of the six filler items was rotated to guard against systematic order or context effects.

The results are largely supportive of the hypotheses. High-NFC subjects exhibited higher affect and purchase intent toward visually, lexically, and informationally complex ads. However, there was no difference between high- and low-NFC subjects for technically complex ads. High-knowledge consumers showed a preference for complex messages along the dimensions of visual, technical, and lexical complexity. However, there was no difference between experts and novices for the informationally complex message.

These results suggest that NFC and knowledge (at least partially) moderate the impact of message complexity. However, the results are not consistent across all four dimensions of ad complexity, suggesting that these individual-difference variables have varying levels and directions of influence on each of the dimensions of ad complexity. The effects are strongest and most consistent for the visual and lexical dimensions with high-NFC and high-knowledge consumers responding more favorably to messages that are visually and lexically complex.

From a strategic perspective, these results suggest that consumers who are high in NFC and knowledge can be effectively targeted, and have their attitudes and purchase intentions enhanced, by the use of appropriate forms of message complexity. The study suffers from two limitations: the use of a student sample and a single product category. Future research should remedy these shortcomings by using more representative samples, studying other product categories, testing for the effects of earlier and later stages of the response hierarchy, and exploring whether the results would hold for other media types.

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When the Attraction Effect Disappears: The Differential Impact of Adding Common versus Unique Features on Consumer Choice¹

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The attraction effect has received considerable attention from decision researchers (e.g., Ariely and Wallsten 1995; Heath and Chatterjee 1995; Huber, Payne, and Puto 1982; Huber and Puto 1983; Pettibone and Wedell 2000; Sen 1998; Simonson 1989, Simonson and Tversky 1992; Tversky and Kahneman 1991). It refers to the ability of an asymmetrically dominated or relatively inferior alternative, when added to the original choice set, to increase the attractiveness and choice probability of the dominating alternative (Simonson 1989). Despite its importance and robustness, the attraction effect has been typically demonstrated using simple choice sets, involving only a few alternatives described on two monotonic attributes (Ratneshwar, Shocker, and Stewart 1987). In this research, using choice tasks similar to those employed in typical attraction effect studies, we examine how adding a third categorical attribute to the choice set affects consumer choice

Consider the following scenario: A consumer is deciding between two identically priced vacation tour packages to a certain foreign country for next summer (Package A [competitor] vs. Package B [target]; 'core set'). Package A guarantees stays at four-star hotels, but the hotels have relatively poor location in terms of proximity to the tourist attractions. Package B guarantees stays at three-star hotels, but the hotels are closer to the tourist attractions and have relatively convenient locations. The trade-off here is between the quality of hotel service and the convenience of hotel location. Now imagine that a third package with the same price (i.e., Package C [decoy]) is introduced in the choice set (the 'extended set'). Package C guarantees stays only at two-star hotels, but the hotels are slightly more conveniently located compared with those of Package B. Our pilot study showed that such stimuli can induce the within-subjects attraction effect (Huber and Puto 1983).

The main experiment had a 2 (set size; core set vs. extended set) x 2 (feature; common vs. unique) mixed design. The first factor, set size, was administered within subjects and the second, feature, was administered between subjects. In the common feature condition, we added a common feature (i.e., 'France' for a vacation site) to each of the options in the original choice set developed in the pilot study. In this context, we argue that the common features (i.e., 'France' for a vacation site) will be ignored by decision makers because of their nondiagnosticity, i.e., they do not differentiate the alternatives (Tversky 1972). Consumers in this setting may well make trade-offs among the alternatives based on the provided information regarding the two monotonic attributes ignoring the shared feature. Thus, the attraction effect is hypothesized to persist under such circumstances. The result confirmed our prediction (McNemar Test, $p < .01$).

In the unique feature condition, we used the same stimuli that were used in the common feature condition except that the competitor's vacation site, France, is replaced with a relatively equally attractive feature, Italy. In this context, we argue that the replacement of the competitor's common feature with a unique feature would encourage categorization based on the added

qualitative attribute comprising unique features, especially if the unique features are important and relatively equally attractive. In such cases, subjects may process alternatives hierarchically; they may initially group alternatives into their categories to eliminate alternatives and simplify choice processing instead of making trade-offs using monotonic attributes (Tversky 1972; Tversky and Sattath 1979). Under such circumstances, the target's share is not likely to increase when the decoy is introduced to the choice set. Thus, we hypothesized that the attraction effect will disappear (or will be attenuated) when the competitor's common feature is replaced with an equally attractive unique feature. The result confirmed our hypothesis. (McNemar Test, $p = 1.00$). The result also indicates that the disappearance of the attraction effect is due to 'the lone option effect'; the competitor's share is larger when it is a lone option than when it shares a common feature with other options.

The current study suggests that when the added qualitative features can be used as a basis for categorization of the options in the choice set, consumers seem to engage in hierarchical processing of the options at the initial stage of the choice process. The categorization of the options may have reduced the extent to which subjects engage in cross-category comparisons in the extended set/unique feature condition. The decrease in the degree of cross-category comparisons in turn would have reduced the magnitude of the attraction effect. The attenuating effect of the added unique feature on the attraction effect raises the question about generalizability of the attraction effect to the environments where consumers can easily categorize choice options into two or more groups. The clarification of the boundary conditions for contextual influences such as the attraction effect in a choice task characterized by mixture of qualitative and quantitative attributes might enhance our understanding of consumer choice dynamics in general as well as the phenomenon of the attraction effect per se.

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Expectation-Driven Separation in Preferential Choice Processes

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In binary choice, *expected separation* is the non-directional expected difference in the holistic value of two alternatives. This article explores three consequences of expected separation. First and most basic, expected separation influences consumers' perceived separation between the two alternatives. Second, to adjust their perceived separation toward what was expected, consumers bias their attribute attractiveness evaluations. Third, consumers adjust their attribute weights to confirm their expectations. Two consumer choice studies support these claims. Relative to those expecting low separation, participants expecting higher separation perceive greater separation, exhibit more distortion of attribute attractiveness evaluations to favor one of the alternatives, and give relatively more weight to attributes that favor one of the two options (on average). Implications of this work and potential extensions are discussed.

It is well known that directional expectations, "I expect A will be better than B," yield expectation-consistent perceptions, "A is better than B." Such directional expectations can be strong, such as loyalty to a team (Hastorf and Cantril 1954) or a position on a social issue like capital punishment (Lord, Ross, and Lepper 1979) or as weak as an emerging preference for an option in a binary choice (Russo, Medvec, and Meloy 1996). Whereas most consumer research has focused on directional beliefs, especially strong ones like brand loyalty (Boulding et al. 1993; Hoch and Ha 1986; Spreng, MacKenzie, and Olshavsky 1996), this article focuses on the non-directional belief of *expected separation*.

Carlson (2000) hypothesized that consumers enter the choice process with a default magnitude of expected separation, representing the belief that the chosen option will be preferred by a margin proportional to the magnitude of the belief. This expected separation is updated throughout the choice process as new information is encountered. By the end of the choice process, expected and perceived separation converge with perceived separation emerging partly from biased predecisional processing to support one of the two alternatives.

The binary choice process has been characterized as one of creating differentiation or separation between options (Svenson 1992, 1996). As this process of distinction proceeds, there emerges at any given time both the directional knowledge that identifies which alternative appears to be superior and the magnitude of the non-directional perceived separation between the options. Following the large body of research on belief-consistent perceptions (Lord et al. 1979; Nickerson 1998; Sanbonmatsu et al. 1998), it is hypothesized that the magnitude of expected separation will influence perceived separation. It was also expected that consumers' reliance on the separation-construction tactics of information distortion and weight alteration would increase as expected separation increased. These hypotheses were examined in two studies.

Study 1 showed how perceived separation was influenced by the sorting mechanism used to establish the choice set. This demonstration paves the way for a more careful examination of biased predecisional processing and its impact on the choice process. Study 2 examined a structured choice between two backpacks to test the hypotheses. Expected separation was manipulated via the prior assessment of a participant's personal preferences and the cover story of a "product simulator" that designed two backpacks to be either slightly different in attractiveness (low expected separation) or considerably different in attractiveness (high expected separation). The results supported all hypotheses and revealed

distortion to be a partial mediator of the relationship between expected and perceived separation.

One natural extension of this work involves expected separation's impact on choice processes from sets of more than two options. Specific aspects worthy of inquiry might include choice deferral (Dhar 1997), attribute exclusion thresholds (Huber and Klein 1991), depth of information search (Bockenholt et al. 1991), and processing strategies (Biggs et al. 1985). Regarding the latter, it has been claimed that consumers select processing strategies based on expected costs and benefits of implementation (Beach and Mitchell 1987; Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1992). Is it possible that expected disparity influences the expected costs and benefits of various strategies, thereby influencing strategy selection? Another issue of interest is whether there exists a nonzero level of expected disparity that is sufficiently low that consumers believe any option will do. We know from consumers' selection among commodities that some choices are made with almost no thought, presumably because (at least in some cases) expected disparity is zero. But does there exist a nonzero threshold of expected disparity for which the choice process defaults to commodity status? That threshold may differ by product category, but is it ever positive?

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The Effect of Interpersonal and Interproduct Comparison on Product Choice

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers rely on comparisons to determine the best product for themselves. Previous research has shown that consumers infer their personal valuation of alternatives from the portfolio of market offerings and some information about their own relative tastes (Prelec, Wernerfelt, and Zettelmeyer 1997). Participants who were asked to indicate in which segment of quality their preferred product lay (their “ideal point”) and then asked to give the percentile rank of each product in an array were likely to choose the product closest to their ideal point. Unfortunately, this reliance on interproduct rather than absolute information about products in a distribution contributes to errorful consumption decisions. For instance, Prelec et al. (1997) demonstrated that, given a distribution of ponchos, consumers who believed they are shorter than average purchased the shortest poncho despite the fact that the longest poncho was a better fit.

In the current experiments, I extend this theory in two ways. First, I demonstrate that consumers not only infer valuations of products from their relative preferences, but also from their relative *skills*. Secondly, I show that consumers’ beliefs about their skill level are often flawed in a predictable way, introducing yet another potential source of error into their product selection. Two studies show that consumers use both interpersonal and interproduct skill-based comparisons to choose products and that the perceived difficulty of tasks drives beliefs about relative skill.

The first experiment examines the role of interpersonal beliefs in product choice and demonstrates that skill-based consumption decisions are driven by both these and interproduct assessments. In this study, 54 participants were given a choice between six MBA programs (ranging from low-skill to high-skill), and chose the program that they thought was best for them. Skill was represented as the average GMAT of students in the program. Unlike previous research that required participants to indicate where their *preferred product lay*, this experiment measured participants’ estimates of their own relative standing on the GMAT as well as their estimates of the relative standing of each MBA program. I expected participants to choose the product that shared their own rank. In other words, participants who thought they were 80th percentile test-takers would choose an MBA program that they thought was 80th percentile. The results of study 1 show the predicted correlation between participants’ interpersonal and interproduct estimates. Furthermore, exactly 50% of participants matched their chosen MBA program to their own percentile rank (more than can be predicted by chance). Clearly, skill-based interpersonal comparisons play a role in product choice. The next experiment explores these beliefs about relative skill.

Study 1 shows that participants rely on both their comparisons to other participants and comparisons between products when they choose products. Previous research has shown that reliance on relative information about products could lead to consumption mistakes (Prelec et al. 1997). However, the extent to which people misestimate their relative skill is unclear. Some research suggests that only a minority of people make errors in interpersonal assessments (Kruger and Dunning 1999, 2002); unskilled people are allegedly more miscalibrated in interpersonal assessments than skilled participants are. I will refer to this as the “unskilled-unaware” hypothesis. This theory suggests that only people in the bottom quartile of performance are inaccurate judges of their standing. However, I argue that a majority of consumers makes

errorful interpersonal estimates. Poor performers are no more error-prone than good performers—they just appear that way in Kruger and Dunning’s data because of two effects: 1) subjective and objective measures of performance are imperfectly correlated, so estimates of relative performance regress toward the mean and 2) overall, people tend to give inflated estimates of relative ability.

If interpersonal assessments (like interproduct assessments in Prelec et al 1997) are errorful, then the results of study 1 suggest that, ultimately, the quality of product choice will suffer. If Kruger and Dunning (1999, 2002) are correct, then it is only the most incompetent consumers who will err in skill-based product choices. On the other hand, if my theory is right, then people who perform well will be as likely as those who do poorly to misestimate their relative standing and purchase inappropriate products. It is unclear which theory is correct and, thus, if a minority or a majority of people misestimate their relative standing. Therefore, study 2 examines whether or not skilled consumers are less errorful in relative estimates than unskilled consumers.

By looking at participants’ estimates by their actual skill level on hard tasks, I was able to see which of the two arguments fit: the “unskilled-unaware” or “everyone-equally-unaware”. I predicted that, because domains that are perceived as difficult lead to significantly lower perceived percentiles (Kruger 1999), low performers would appear to be more accurate and high performers less accurate on difficult tasks (supporting the equally unaware hypothesis). If unawareness is universal, then it will be the unskilled participants who will appear to be more aware of their relative standing even on difficult tasks, just as it was the skilled who appeared to be more aware on Kruger and Dunning’s easier tasks.

In this experiment, 40 participants were given six sets of trivia questions that varied in difficulty. For each of the sets of trivia, participants indicated their predicted percentile rank and the difficulty of the task.

A repeated measures MANOVA revealed that average percentile estimates decreased as the tasks became more difficult. In the sets of trivia that resulted in the lowest percentile estimates, *t* tests showed a reversal of the pattern reported by Kruger and Dunning (1999): Skilled participants were more inaccurate than unskilled participants were. Therefore, on hard tasks, it was the skilled performers who seemed unaware of their standing. This means that many more consumers than just the 25% of people that Kruger and Dunning hypothesized were unable to make accurate interpersonal assessments.

The results of these two studies demonstrate that skill-based consumption decisions are driven by comparative beliefs and that these beliefs and ultimately consumption itself can be predictably shifted. Furthermore, errors in interpersonal assessments are as common for skilled performers as for unskilled performers.

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Inside the Minds of Buyers and Sellers: Mental Construals and Prospect Theory

Himanshu Mishra, University of Iowa
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research into decision-making has revealed an asymmetric response pattern towards losses as contrasted with gains (loss aversion) measured relative to any individual's initial status quo position (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). One of the outcomes of such a response function is that sellers tend to overvalue objects relative to buyers. That is, the lowest price at which consumers agree to part from a good (selling price) is often considerably higher than the highest price at which they agree to acquire the same item. For instance, Heberlein and Bishop (1985) found that people were willing to pay \$31 for a hunting permit but were not willing to sell it for less than \$143. Thaler (1980) called this pattern—the fact that people demand more to give up an object that they would be willing to pay to acquire it—the *endowment effect*. The endowment effect has proved to be exceedingly robust (see, for e.g., Kahneman, Knetsch and Thaler, 1990). More recently, researchers have examined the underlying processes responsible for the endowment effect. Carmon and Ariely (2000) provide evidence that the endowment effect appears to reflect a differential attention to information, specifically a focus on the foregone.

We extend this line of research by inquiring into the processes and mental representations in the minds of buyers and sellers. Specifically, we hypothesize a fundamental difference in the mental construals of the object being traded. A seller's mental construal of the item being traded over-emphasizes the positive aspects of the foregone (i.e., the positive features of the item since that is what s/he stands to lose in a transaction) and under-represents the negative aspects of the foregone (i.e., the negative features of the item since that is not coded as a loss and does not loom as large). The valuation process is thus overly influenced by the positive features of the object and leads to an overvaluation of the object in question. We report herein the results of three experiments that tested predictions derived from such a process.

In Experiment One, we manipulated the foregoing of the positive features associated with the trade. We provided buyers and sellers with mugs that they could buy (or sell). Some sellers however, were provided with two mugs and asked to sell one. Other explanations for the endowment effect (affective overvaluation, a focus on the foregone item) would not predict an elimination of the endowment effect. We hypothesized that, in the two-mug condition, the fact that the positive features of the mug could still be enjoyed in the other mug (that was not sold) would alter the mental construal of sellers such that the positive features would no longer be coded as lost (and thus over-emphasized). That is, we predicted an elimination of the endowment effect. Results were consistent with such an analysis.

In Experiment Two, we collected process measures to assess the underlying mental construals of the object. Specifically, participants were randomly assigned to be buyers or sellers and provided with a pen. They were asked to quote reservation prices and to generate a list of thoughts about the pen, code the thoughts as positive, negative or neutral and state how difficult the thought had been to generate. Results were consistent with our conceptualization. It was, in general, easy to generate positive thoughts (the pen was an attractive pen) and buyers and sellers tended to initially generate positive thoughts. Later, however, sellers tended to generate neutral rather than negative, thoughts while buyers tended to generate negative, rather than neutral thoughts. Again, this is consistent with an under-representation of negative features in the minds of sellers.

Experiment Three utilized response latencies to assess differential memory traces in the minds of buyers and sellers for the object being traded. Participants were randomly assigned to be buyers and sellers and provided with a mug. They were also exposed to four statements about the mug, two positive and two negative. They were then asked to state their reservation prices and after a time delay, were tested for their memory for the positive and negative attributes of the mug. Consistent with our conceptualization, there emerged significant biases in the mental representations of buyers and sellers, as evidenced in the error patterns and response latencies. Specifically, buyers made a similar amount of errors on positive and negative features, but sellers made more errors on negative features than on positive features (i.e., they were more likely to misremember negative features as not having been there). An analysis of the response latencies for facilitations and hindrances was also consistent with our conceptualization. Buyers experienced greater hindrance on positive (rather than negative) features when statements were presented as false, rather than true. Sellers experienced facilitation in denying false negatives, as compared to affirming true negatives. In other words, it was easier to accept the absence of a positive feature (since it was presumably offset by the other, over-represented positive features but accepting the existence of a negative feature was much more difficult).

In conjunction, the three studies provide a compelling picture of the differing mental construals of the item being traded that exist in buyers and sellers' minds. It is these differing mental construals that seem to mediate the endowment effect.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Deliberation versus Automaticity: When Considering Just One is Misleading

C. Miguel Brendl, INSEAD

“Who Am I Playing With? Interpretative Thinking and Automatic Effects of Context for Impression Formation in a Prisoner’s Dilemma Game”

Dirk Smeesters, Luk Warlop, & Eddy Van Avermaet

Many marketing interactions are like games with interdependent outcomes (e.g., sales negotiations). In such situations, it is important to construct a clear impression of the interaction partner; however, the impressions formed are easily influenced by the decision context. We argue that marketing interactions naturally activate a mindset. In three experiments we show that when the activated mindset is to interpret the interaction partner’s behaviors, the impressions of the interaction partner assimilate to accessible knowledge. This was the case even when the accessible knowledge consisted of extreme exemplars (e.g., after subliminally priming Hitler). When the mindset was to compare the behaviors to a reference point, however, the impression of the interaction partner was contrasted to the same knowledge base (again Hitler).

“Dynamic Effects of the Interplay Between Spontaneous Affect and Goals”

Suresh Ramanathan & Geeta Menon

We show that priming a temporary hedonic goal (choosing a breakfast cereal) in people who also have chronic hedonic goals results in more positive evaluations of goal-related items (sweet foods), the *longer* the time delay since priming. On the other hand for those without such chronic hedonic goals, the same priming effect is strong after a brief time delay since priming, but decays rapidly thereafter. We conclude that deliberative goal setting (choosing a breakfast cereal) triggers different automatic processes, either motivational ones when chronic goals are present, or cognitive ones when no chronic goals are present.

“Re-introducing Associative Mechanisms Into Persuasion Research”

Maria Galli, Amitava Chattopadhyay, & C. Miguel Brendl

This research investigates the importance of associative mechanisms, such as classical conditioning, in persuasion. Three experiments demonstrate that: (1) conditioning is more effective in shaping attitudes the more cognitive resources are devoted to the conditioning procedure, and that (2) despite forewarning of persuasive intent and a conscious attempt to avoid persuasion, once the cognitive resources are expended during the conditioning procedure, formation of the attitude is uncontrollable and thus can influence subsequent decisions. In fact, because forewarning focuses attention on the conditioning and learning is uncontrollable, forewarning boomerangs: it increases the effect of conditioning. These results have important theoretical and practical implications. First, they contribute to a better understanding of the process by which conditioned associations are formed. Second, they shed new light on the importance of associative mechanisms in persuasion, by demonstrating that they can be more powerful than commonly assumed, and that they are not germane only to low-involvement advertising situations or for low involvement products. Third, they suggest caution should be exercised when trying to warn consumers of harmful influences (e.g., tobacco advertising), as warning could increase rather than decrease advertising effectiveness.

ROUNDTABLE Markets and Cultures

Discussion Leaders:

A. Fuat Firat, Arizona State University West
Alladi Venkatesh, Center for Research on Information Technology and Organizations

Following economy's central role and influence in human lives that lasted many scores, culture is beginning to take the center stage alongside the economy. There is also a growing awareness that the economy is a part and a construct of human culture. Thus, the market that has been the medium through which modern society's economic relations were practiced, especially in capitalist western societies, is being subject to cultural scrutiny.

With this awareness, an increasing number of scholars across many social science and humanities disciplines, as well as in consumer research, have begun to study the interconnections between markets and cultures. Several insights have been developed based on these studies. One is that in the contemporary global order what has been known as consumer culture has become primarily a market culture. This market culture seems to be transcending national cultures within which it has historically flourished. In effect, this cultural collective seems to thrive on incorporating all marketable elements of all cultures, and, today, forms the basis of globalization. A second insight indicates that the market culture also contributes to either the marginalization of traditional cultural systems that cannot adapt to commercial, marketable elements or coopts them into the market culture. Thirdly, observations indicate that many countercultural theaters are arising that propose and promote non-market alternatives to human relations, or alternatives that try to utilize the market as one of a multiple means of human relations. Finally, there are many studies that have investigated the local-global interactions and implications of globalization discovering a multiplicity of consequences, including creolization, hybridization, and fragmentation. A selected bibliography of these works is provided below.

These are the debates that are currently directed toward an understanding of phenomena that are in the process of development. They all point to different perspectives and perceptions and would greatly benefit from a sincere, open discussion among consumer scholars. This is the major underlying motivation for this roundtable: to bring researchers who have invested in these different perspectives together and exchange ideas and set agendas pertaining to this very important topic.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Drivers and Contextual Moderators of Consumer Value Formation in Participative Pricing Mechanisms

Amar Cheema, Washington University in St. Louis
Utpal Dholakia, Rice University

Auctioneers in both brick-and-mortar and Internet institutions recognize the importance of understanding consumer behavior for their trade. Growing consumer interest in on-line auctions such as eBay, and several recent calls for academic research (e.g., Bazerman 2001, Chakravarti et al. 2002, McAfee and McMillan 1996) have stimulated research on consumer behavior in auctions, and more generally, in settings where consumers participate in dynamic price formation processes.

There is a mature literature on the economic theory of auctions (Klemperer 2000) and significant empirical work testing this theory both with laboratory and field data (e.g., Kagel 1995, Laffont 1997). However, this paradigm makes restrictive assumptions regarding consumer values and bidding strategies. The laboratory tests often use stylized procedures and fictitious commodities designed to prioritize pristine theory tests. Although these tests often document failures of the celebrated revenue equivalence theorem (Vickrey 1961), large gaps remain in our understanding of what drives and moderates consumer behavior in auctions involving real products.

The assumptions of independent private values and even the pure common value model appear questionable in the light of the evidence from these studies as well as the work on contextually labile and constructed values (e.g., Ariely et al. 2002). Although Milgrom and Weber (1982) offer the “affiliated values” model to accommodate notions of consumer learning and updating of values as well as bidding strategy, more research is needed on the behavioral underpinnings of affiliation and its impact on consumer learning and strategic behavior in non-posted price contexts such as auctions (Chakravarti et al. 2002).

Consumer behavior in auctions is influenced by a variety of individual bidder differences and contextual information surrounding specific auction mechanisms (whether in traditional or on-line formats). The effects are important not only for their outcome impact, but also because they may be interpreted in the light of explanatory behavioral theory. Recent research has focused on generating a theoretical framework and an empirical understanding of these effects. This session brought together three such papers.

The Chandran and Morwitz paper examined the effect of bidders’ mindsets (whether deliberating a choice or implementing a chosen course) on their actions as they participate in the bidding process. The research demonstrated how participative pricing mechanisms focus the consumers on action and elicit greater commitment to the purchase. This action orientation leads to higher prices in auctions as compared to fixed-price offers. Further, individual differences in perceived control of the outcome moderate this effect.

The Dholakia and Simonson paper examined the impact of a specific contextual factor in online auctions, namely the prices of items listed adjacent to the focal item. This paper showed how these prices serve as dynamic and persistent anchors in the value formation process. Using data from eBay auctions, the authors find that adjacent prices positively influence the final bid price. Moreover, an individual difference variable (bidder experience) lowers susceptibility to such context effects in a manner consistent with prior work on context effects (Lynch et al. 1991).

The Cheema, Chakravarti, and Sinha paper explored the impact of individual-specific factors on how bidders construct values and implement bidding strategies based on the information that unfolds as auctions proceed. Their results show the influence of bidders’ goals and prior price knowledge on bidder behavior. The effects are specifically contrasted across different contexts: ascending and descending auctions with differing deliberation times. They also examine consumers’ post-auction, outcome-contingent regret levels and the motivated reasoning that drives changes in value.

Apart from directly meeting the contemporary calls for behavioral literature on auctions, the papers in this session focused more generally on value formation processes and context effects in consumer behavior. Together these papers provided new behavioral insights into participative pricing processes, and hold a potentially broader appeal to researchers interested in the sociology of competitive behaviors in consumer markets (Smith 1989, 1993).

SHORT ABSTRACTS

“Effects of Participative Pricing on Consumers’ Cognitions and Actions: Goal Theoretic Perspective”

Sucharita Chandran, Boston University
Vicki G. Morwitz, New York University

This paper explores consumer cognitions and actions that stem from participation in price determination. Participative Pricing is defined to include mechanisms where consumers participate in price setting in some way (for example via bidding in traditional and reverse auctions). Using a goal theoretic framework, this paper shows that relative to economically equivalent fixed price offers, a participative pricing offer focuses consumers on action (setting a price) rather than evaluation. By virtue of the intermediary price setting process, participative pricing offers evoke an execution orientation that drives higher behavioral commitment (purchase intents) and more positive attitudes. However, this process is moderated by consumers’ perceptions of their ability to control shopping decisions.

“Dynamic and Persistent Anchors: How Adjacent Listing Prices Influence Focal Listing Success in Online Auctions”

Utpal M. Dholakia, Rice University
Itamar Simonson, Stanford University

This research investigates the *contextual influence* of adjacent listing prices on a focal listing’s success in online auctions. Both the starting price and final price of adjacent listings are found to *positively* influence the focal listing’s success—as defined by bids accrued and its final price—*after controlling for* the listing-related determinants of auction success such as its starting price, duration, and seller’s reputation. Evidence suggests that adjacent listing prices may work as *dynamic and persistent anchors* throughout the auction duration. Further, these context effects are moderated by bidder experience — bidders appear to become *less susceptible* to such influences with increasing experience. The practical implications for sellers are considered and future research opportunities are discussed.

“Consumer Value Construction and Bidding Behavior in Auctions: Contrasting the Effect of Motivational and Cognitive Influences across Ascending and Descending Auctions”

Amar Cheema, Washington University in St. Louis

Dipankar Chakravarti, University of Colorado at Boulder.

Atanu Sinha, University of Colorado at Boulder

We experimentally study the value construction, bidding behavior, and regret management processes in both ascending and descending auctions. We focus on how bidders' motivations interact with knowledge (prior price information) and value salience to influence bidding behavior. We also examine how consumers mentally manipulate their own values and their assessment of competitors' values to manage post-auction regret, contingent on win/loss outcomes. The interactive effects of motivation, prior knowledge, and value salience are shown to differ across auction types. Further, post-auction regret is driven by goal-incongruent outcomes in descending auctions, but only by win/loss outcomes in ascending auctions. We contrast the effects of manipulated variables across auction types (ascending versus descending) and suggest implications for auction design.

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The Limits of Self-Regulation in Behavior, Consumption and Choice

Susan Jung Grant, University of Colorado

Whether a consumer has determined to forgo chocolate, embark on an exercise regime or become master of his destiny, sustained self-control might be considered a key to success. Yet maintaining the strength of will to conquer such challenges is clearly a test that many fail. One explanation for faltering will power is provided by Baumeister and his colleagues (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Vohs & Heatherton, 2000; Baumeister & Vohs, 2003). In their model, the psychological resource that sustains the self's ability to regulate control or effort is conceived of as a resource that is temporarily depleted upon use, and thus, makes extended acts of self-control difficult to sustain. This session was designed to explore how the depletion of self-regulatory resources affects consumption behavior and what the potential consequences may be.

This session sought to extend this theoretical approach in an effort to understand how consumers behave under circumstances in which their self-regulatory resources are experimentally depleted. The three session participants are investigating this question from different angles; the first two papers relate the study of self-regulation to consumption contexts, such as choice and impulsive buying, while the third paper examines the effect that the nature of consumer goals may have on self-regulatory depletion.

The first paper, by Baumeister, discussed the evidence for a model of self-regulation as a resource that is situationally depleted upon use. Baumeister also related research pertaining to the depletion of regulatory resources to the act of choice. The results of two studies suggest that making choices in a consumption context renders the person vulnerable to self-regulation failure in a subsequent context. Moreover, Baumeister put forth the notion that situations calling for extensive choice making, such as in high-involvement purchasing circumstances or when choice is difficult, may incidentally promote self-regulation failure in subsequent, unrelated tasks.

In the second paper, Vohs and Faber investigate how depleted regulatory resources in consumers might account for impulsivity in purchasing contexts. In their research, these authors measure impulsivity by asking respondents about their willingness to pay, by observing their purchase behavior in a mock store with real money, and by measuring impulsivity on a scale. In addition to studying the effects of self-regulation depletion, Vohs and Faber also test interactions of impulsivity as a trait with experimental inductions that require the expenditure of regulatory resources.

The third paper, by Jung Grant and Park, investigates how the framing of goals may provide insight into how regulatory resources are managed. This work suggests that the self-regulatory resource may be a muscle that strengthens with use. Theorizing from Higgins' self-regulatory goal focus framework (1997) is integrated with Baumeister's model of self-regulation, suggesting that the limitations on the regulatory resource may be influenced by an individual's chronic regulatory orientation and the framing of the tasks that individuals attempt. By manipulating the motivational frame (an achievement orientation versus a safety orientation) of tasks respondents are asked to execute within Baumeister's two-task paradigm, this research suggests self resources develop as a muscle that strengthens with consistent exertion. These findings have implications for the way consumers pursue goals over the long term.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

"Self-Regulation, Conscious Choice, and Consumer Decisions"

Roy F. Baumeister

This presentation sought to extend theories of self-regulation to the arena of consumer decisions. First, an outline of the ways in which previous models of self-regulation can be applied to purchasing and consumer research was discussed. Second, the idea that making choices, a behavior that is central to many consumer-related phenomena, is a self-regulatory act was put forth. The act of making choices is shown to relate to self-regulation. The results of two studies suggest that choice making leads to self-regulation failure.

Failures of self-regulation lie at the heart of many of the greatest problems in contemporary society. Overeating, getting too little exercise, alcohol abuse, cigarette use, and marital infidelity, are but a few of the consequences of failing at self-control. (The terms self-regulation and self-control are used interchangeably.) Spending large amounts of money at once, living beyond one's means, not planning financially for the future, and making poor consumer choices are also problems that are likely linked to self-control.

Although the concept of self-regulation has begun to make its way into consumer thinking, there are currently few existing associations between these two areas. Most notably, Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) wrote about the push-and-pull between desire to have a product and the cognitive efforts to restrain the urge, a conflict at the heart of personal spending. A recent article (Baumeister, 2002) three ways in which consumer research could benefit from self-regulation models.

First, the presence of conflicting goals can easily sidetrack self-regulation efforts. One goal, for example, may be to promote one's business, which means paying for advertisements, refurbishing the office, or taking clients out to dinner. Conversely, the goal of saving more money for retirement may easily suffer if the goal

of promoting the business is attempted. A second route to self-regulation failure involves keeping track of one's progress toward the goal. Studies on eating, for instance, demonstrate that overconsumption occurs with ineffective monitoring. Third, a recent model of self-regulation mechanisms (e.g., Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996) posits that the ability to exert self-control is governed by a finite, but global, set of resources. Situational demands calling for self-regulation temporarily deplete this resource, resulting in poor self-regulation. Empirical studies validate this postulate, in showing that engaging in self-regulation on an initial task renders self-regulatory ability on a second task less effective (e.g., Baumeister, Muraven, & Tice, 1998).

Research on the resource model of self-control has expanded to include conscious choice making as a self-regulatory task that depletes the limited supply of regulatory resources. Daily human life is replete with decisions and yet the psychological consequences of decision making are unknown. Decision making itself is related to self-regulation, in that the act of making a choice means to have controlled a given outcome. Additionally, the act of choice making involves several responses that are intertwined with self-regulation: selecting options, drawing relevant comparisons, discarding irrelevant information, making priorities, and ultimately selecting an option to pursue. The act of deciding may have consequences for the rest of the psychological system, in that it may lead to self-control fatigue and later self-control failure. The choices that consumers make may therefore lead to subsequent self-regulation failures.

Two studies tested the idea that choice making leads to self-regulation failure, presumably because it depletes the same resource used in exerting self-control (Vohs, Twenge, Baumeister, Schmeichel, & Tice, 2003). In Study 1, participants in the choice condition were asked to make a series of binary choices between products, such as choosing between a yellow candle and a white candle, and then between a white candle and a purple candle. Participants in the no choice condition reported their opinions on each of eight advertisements. Next, all participants were seated in front of twenty small cups of liquid that had been made with orange drink mix, sugar, water, and vinegar. Participants were offered a nickel for each cup they could drink. Because the drink did not taste good, we surmised that it would take self-control to override the impulse to stop drinking. The results showed that there was a significant difference in the amount of vinegar drink consumed, with the choice condition participants drinking fewer ounces than the no choice participants.

A second study examined naturalistic choice making and self-regulatory ability. Participants at a shopping mall completed a questionnaire on the extent of their decision making during their excursion. Afterwards, they were asked to complete as many of 72 three-digit by three-digit addition problems (e.g., $349 + 891 = ?$) as they could. Time spent on the math problems was also measured. The results showed that the more choices people reported having made that day, the fewer math problems they solved and the less time they spent completing them.

The results of these studies indicate that choice making is costly to the self, in that it impairs further self-regulatory abilities. Moreover, it suggests that circumstances calling for extensive choice making, such as many purchasing situations, may incidentally promote self-regulation failure. In sum, hypotheses derived from self-regulation models are encouraging avenues for predicting consumer behaviors.

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"Self-Regulatory Abilities and Impulsive Spending"

Kathleen Vohs and Ronald Faber

In the current research, we tested the hypothesis that weakened self-regulatory abilities promote impulsive spending. This prediction was derived from a model that describes self-control abilities in terms of a limited resource. The results of three studies suggested that self-regulation is a crucial determinant of impulsive spending, such that lower self-regulatory abilities due to a depletion of regulatory resources led to increased impulsive spending tendencies and behavior.

Research on impulsive spending began with the idea that the qualities of products (especially "impulsive" products) were what determined impulsive spending. Later, research shifted to an understanding that impulsiveness comes from within the consumer and not from within the product. Consumers' internal states, affective experiences, and trait impulsiveness, have been taken into account in recent decades (e.g., Rook & Fisher, 1995). However, these models have fallen short of providing a comprehensive account of impulsive spending, suggesting that crucial aspects are missing from current perspectives.

Controlled outcomes, such as eating, smoking, drug abuse, and consumer behaviors, have two components: the strength of the urge to engage in the behavior and restraints on that urge. Consumer research has done well in accounting for the urge component of impulsive spending, but little has been done to investigate the strength of restraints on the urge. Expanding the scope of research beyond only desire to buy to include self-control variables was the goal of the current research.

A recent model of self-regulation posits that the ability to control desired outcomes, restrain urges, override incipient responses, and manage emotions is governed by a global set of resources. This pool of resources is finite and thus can become momentarily depleted by situational demands (Vohs & Heatherton, 2000). Studies testing this model use a two-task paradigm in which participants complete one task that varies in self-control demands (high versus low/no self-control, typically) and then all participants are tested on a second task that requires self-control. Results of over 12 studies demonstrate that participants who had engaged in self-regulation initially perform worse on the second self-control task, suggesting that some impairment in self-control ability occurred as a result of the first task (see Baumeister & Vohs, 2003).

Three studies tested the hypothesis that self-regulation is a crucial determinant of impulsive spending. In Study 1, participants were shown a video of a woman being interviewed; there was no audio played during the tape and participants were told they would later complete personality ratings of the woman. The tape also

included a series of irrelevant words that appeared on the bottom of the screen. All participants saw the words on the screen; *attention-control* participants were told to ignore the words and immediately revert their attention back to the woman being interviewed, whereas *no attention-control* participants were not told any information about the words. Thus, the two groups differed only in their attention-control instructions. Afterwards, participants completed a version of a buying impulsiveness scale (Rook & Fisher, 1995), which was modified to pertain to how participants would respond if they were in a buying situation “right now.” The results showed that participants who engaged in attention control reported that they would be more likely to impulsively buy at that moment, as evidenced by higher scores on the scale. Presumably, participants in the attention control condition expended some of their regulatory resources in controlling their attention during the video and hence were less able to restrain urges to buy.

Study 2 used the same attention control manipulation as in Study 1 and subsequently asked participants to view pictures of 18 high-quality items (e.g., cars, tuxedos, boats) and name the price at which they would be willing to buy each item. Analyses of the proposed prices showed that participants in the attention-control condition would pay more money than the no attention-control participants for the same products.

Study 3 used a behavioral control manipulation and measured actual buying behavior. Regulatory resources were manipulated by having participants read aloud a set of boring historical biographies. Participants in the *behavioral-control* condition read them aloud under instructions to infuse into their reading as much emotion and body movements as they could; *no behavioral-control* participants were asked to read the biographies naturally. Afterwards, all participants were told that they would receive \$10 and were given the opportunity to buy products from a mock store as part of a marketing study. Participants were told that they could leave with all the money or spend any or all of it to buy products from the mock store. Analyses showed that behavioral-control participants spent more money and bought more products than no behavioral-control participants. Moreover, using scores on the trait version of the buying impulsiveness scale, we found that the increased buying after depletion was found primarily among participants who reported chronically high buying impulsiveness. This state-by-trait interaction suggests that the effects of depletion on restraints to buy are particularly predictive among people for whom the urge to buy is especially strong.

The results of all three studies indicate that when self-regulatory abilities are low, buying impulsiveness is significantly more likely. These studies also lend support to the notion that restraints on the urge to buy are an important component of impulsive buying.

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“The Effect of Goal Orientation on Self-Regulatory Depletion”

Susan Jung Grant and Jongwon Park

Successful self-regulation involves the exertion of what is commonly called will power in the service of a goal. Though subject to failure, this resource has been conceived of as a muscle (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996; Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). We explore the aptness of this metaphor by examining whether the conceptualization of the goal affects how this self-regulatory muscle is managed.

Higgins and his colleagues have conceptualized a framework of self regulation characterized by two motivational systems, known as promotion and prevention. These orientations describe whether individuals pursue goals to approach a positive outcome (seeking advancement) or goals to avoid a negative outcome (seeking safety). Although people are thought to have an innate chronically accessible goal focus, we manipulate how the goal is construed in order to make a particular goal focus situationally accessible. At this point, there has been little research addressing whether these orientations develop as a muscle would be strengthened with repeated use or whether they are merely different functions that draw on the same regulatory resource. Determining the dimensionality of these orientations is potentially important for understanding how adept individuals may be in switching orientations, and how these two orientations develop within an individual. We believe combining Higgins’ framework with Baumeister’s model of self-regulation may extend understanding of these motivational issues.

Therefore, our research question bridges these two related but separate streams of research to enhance understanding of the structure of self regulation, particularly with regard to the two motivational systems posited by Higgins. Specifically, we examine the effect of exerting self-regulation in one regulatory mode on the exertion of self-regulation in the other regulatory mode (e.g. promotion).

We find preliminary evidence that suggests that when Colorado students (whose chronically accessible orientation is promotion) are asked to perform two consecutive tasks, self-regulation failure occurs when either task conflicts with respondents’ chronic orientation. However, performing consecutive tasks that are framed in terms of promotion does not lead to depletion. In a second study, we find that when Korean students (whose chronically accessible orientation is prevention) are asked to perform two consecutive tasks, self-regulation failure occurs only when both tasks conflict with respondents’ chronic orientation. Respondents who execute a task that is framed in terms of prevention after executing a promotion task (or *vice versa*) or who execute consecutive prevention tasks show no signs of self-regulation failure. This suggests that self-regulation may be thought of as a muscle that is strengthened by exertion. It is plausible, then, that individuals’ cultural context may develop the self-control resource asymmetrically, depending on whether the culture is more oriented toward achievement (promotion) or safety (prevention).

In these studies, we operationalized self-control in terms of a promotion task (to type as fast as possible in a given amount of time) or a prevention task (to type with as few mistakes as possible in a given amount of time) and measuring performance on a subsequent task that is systematically varied as a promotion task (to solve as many anagrams as possible to win a prize) or a prevention task (to solve as many anagrams as possible to avoid losing a prize).

Finally we propose a third study that would test our findings using consumption-relevant stimuli and dependent measures. The study design calls for examining the effect of framing an initial

consumption task (engaging in product information search) framed in terms of a promotion goal (identifying the product with the most positive features) versus a prevention goal (identifying the product with the fewest negative features) on a second consumption task. (drinking a nutritional beverage) in terms of a promotion goal (to boost health and vitality) versus a prevention goal (to ward off illness and fatigue). We predict that if there are two independent dimensions of self-regulatory resources, the initial task should impair consumption of the second task only when the regulatory focus of the first task matches that of the second task.

Through this work, we hope to extend the self-regulatory model pioneered by Baumeister and his colleagues and to suggest strategies by which people might sustain a long-term focus on a goal. If distinct regulatory resources can be characterized by the goal focus one adopts, one conclusion of this research may be that people could be more effective in carrying out a long-term goal by alternating the framing of the tasks that help one to achieve the ultimate goal.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Beyond the Sacred-Profane Dichotomy in Consumer Research

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OVERVIEW AND CONTRIBUTIONS

This session contributes to a theory of the relationship between consumer goods and what is conventionally termed “the sacred.” Discussions of the sacred in consumer research are rare. Only 10 papers in ACR proceedings devote explicit attention to this aspect of consumption and consumer goods, and most discussions of possession meaning neglect the sacred dimension. And yet, as previous consumer research demonstrates, important life transition experiences (Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry 1989; Belk 1992; Curasi, Price and Arnould 2000; Otnes and Lowry 1993) implicate the sacred and sacred goods.

This session contributes to consumer behavior theory about sacred consumer goods in three important ways. First, we demonstrate the limitations of the Durkheimian sacred-profane dichotomy that constitutes the received wisdom in previous consumer research. In our sample, consumers believe objects combine both sacred and profane qualities either temporally (across the life of the object) or within a single historical moment. Objects are more reasonably described in terms of contextually and relationally ascribed sacred and profane qualities, mapped over a temporal lifecycle. Second, consumers enlist marketers to help transform objects from profane to sacred or to help recover or sustain the sacred from the profane qualities immanent in an object. In contrast with previous research that casts markets into the profane domain, marketers create sacredness in a myriad of ways in cooperation with and sometimes in opposition to consumers. Third, the sacred-profane continuum is enriched with the addition of a purity-pollution continuum based on research in South Asia. Specifically, the purity-pollution continuum enhances our understanding of how consumers are transformed through strategic use of consumer goods that vary in their sacred and profane qualities.

The session draws on empirical studies of consumer and marketer practices with jewelry in both Western and South Asian contexts. Several unique features characterized the papers presented in this session proposal. First, all three papers focus on jewelry. Laden with material and symbolic, intimate and social meanings, jewelry is an apt substantive domain to explore a brew of both sacred and profane properties. Second, all the papers identify family and household as key sites for enacting sacralization processes and all papers touch on the intergenerational transfer of meanings. Third, the three papers represent a diversity of cultures, informants and qualitative methods to advance our understanding of sacred consumer goods.

The Arnould and Price paper sets the theoretical frame for the session and draws on empirical illustrations to support an amended theory of sacredness that differentiates it from modern conceptions that inform previous theory and research. The Hartman and Kiecker paper uncovers how consumers and marketers cooperate and collide to manipulate goods that combine sacred and profane meanings. Their research identifies how marketers contribute to or facilitate consumers’ aims with regard to the creation and/or intensification of sacred possession meanings. They employ a life cycle perspective to articulate underlying sacralizing processes not previously identified in the literature. Fernandez and Veer’s research reasserts the importance of an alternative, neglected explanatory model to the sacred-profane dichotomy, that of purity and pollution. Further, their paper shows, via jewelry in Indian weddings, how sacred meanings move across family and generational boundaries, linking and dividing social categories as they do so.

“Rethinking the Sacred and the Profane in Postmodernity”

Eric Arnould and Linda Price

Following in the Durkheimian tradition, in their masterful *Journal of Consumer Research* article, Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989) identify properties of sacredness, and processes through which consumers sacralize commodities and perpetuate their sacred status. Similarly, Curasi, Price and Arnould (forthcoming 2004) illustrate processes through which consumers seek to assert the inalienability of sacred heirloom objects. In both works, the authors emphasize the dichotomous nature of sacred and profane categories, and accept the Durkheimian premise that the sacred is always in danger of profanation. In a different vein, Arnould, Price and Otnes (1999, 1997) discuss how consumers may experience transformative experiences through a variety of practices involving consumption objects and services, ostensibly through contact with sacred powers. In this work, the distance between sacred and profane worlds is also taken for granted, even seen as a problem; magic is a laborious process designed to invest the profane with some sacred aura.

The proposal Arnould and Price make in this paper is that in postmodern consumer culture the sacred and profane no longer comprise (if they ever did) the dichotomy previous research supposes. Their approach borrows from Miller’s (1998) insistence on the infusion of the sacred into mundane shopping behaviors. They borrow from Kopytoff (1986) to suggest that the sacred and profane may be viewed as a situational or temporal continuum. Their view incorporates Campbell’s (1987) idea of imaginative longing as a key motivational force in modern consumerism. And they borrow ideas of the relational nature and mobility of object meanings from semiotic and post-modern theorists (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998; Floch 1995; Holt 1997). They extend these perspectives in a re-consideration of the classic sacred-profane dichotomy.

Arnould and Price demonstrate the myriad ways that both sacred and profane meanings attach to special possessions and are strategically and contextually ascribed both by consumers and marketers. Their theoretical framework builds from qualitative data sets generated to identify cherished possessions and their significance to consumers. They conducted open-ended depth interviews with a broad range of consumers about a variety of topics. In these discussions, jewelry emerged as one of the items informants most frequently mentioned. Subsequent data collection focused on rings. In this paper, analysis drew upon the uses and meanings of cherished jewelry.

They outline empirical findings that contrast with prior research on sacred and profane consumer goods. First, they found cases where attributions of profane meanings to consumer goods do not endanger attributions of sacred meanings. Consumers attribute both sacred and profane meanings; the meanings attached vary with use context. For example, one family member loans another money (profane) in exchange for a ring in order to avoid pawning the ring. The first person is motivated by the belief that the ring should become a bequest (sacred) to the second person’s daughter. In other cases, a profane meaning is covered over through narrative with a sacred meaning—an engagement ring is modified to propel a story that retains both the (profane) betrayal of a broken engagement and a subsequent (sacred) triumph and redemption.

Second, Arnould and Price identify several cases where consumers imaginatively distribute profane and sacred meanings. For example, a consumer may gift an object at a point when meanings

are profane for the owner in order to sustain the object's sacred meanings. Thus, a divorced mother passes a now profane wedding ring to her daughter giving her custody of sacred meanings that she can no longer sustain. The converse is also found. For example, the current owner considers liquidating a pocket watch contaminated with the essence of the current owner's late revered father since potential recipients "in the current generation" would not revere it.

Third, in contrast with research that associates the marketplace with the profane, the authors show that North American consumers may enlist the marketplace both in sacralization and in the perpetuation of sacredness. Thus, consumers may use jewelers as ritual agents (Rook 1985) to move objects imaginatively from one condition to another. Sometimes jewelers are enlisted to facilitate intergenerational transfers. For example, a grandparent's small diamond is integrated into a new setting for a granddaughter's wedding. A mother's pearl necklace is remade for a daughter's 50th birthday. Sometimes jewelers are enlisted to create items that amalgamate life transition meanings. For example, a person has a high school class ring melted down, shaped into a nugget and set with a diamond from her mother's necklace. Or, the diamond from a small engagement ring is added to a larger setting to celebrate a 25th wedding anniversary. The enlarged ring symbolizes the rite of intensification, the anniversary celebration.

Finally, examination of consumer-to-consumer and business-to-consumer practices allows the authors to identify some sacralization and perpetuation processes not previously identified (Belk, et al. 1989). The role of narrative framing has been mentioned, for example. Arnould and Price also found people purchasing jewelry in the past in anticipation that it would become sacred in the future. Further, they bundle jewels and precious jewelry from diverse kinsfolk to multiply and intensify the sacred quality of each element. But these sets do not form a collection in the conventional sense. In a different vein is the case of jewelers who refuse or discourage clients from breaking up an aesthetically unique piece of jewelry, but instead substitute new jewels and setting. In one case, a jeweler actually bought the item and substituted another. Thus, jewelers may sometimes act as guardians of sacred objects for the "right" owner. Guardianship has been noted previously, but only in domestic possession transfer contexts.

The authors suggest that well-known postmodern social processes favor changed emphases in the constitution of the sacred. These include the erosion of spatial horizons and boundaries, the flattening of time, the premium placed on identity work, and the reconstitution of personal morality as emotional self-expression and self-definition. Three sacred outcomes can be identified. Salvific moments are unscripted eruptions of the sacred in otherwise mundane contexts, such as perfect moments in sports contests during which people experience an aesthetic unity of being. Affective parishes describe spatially localized eruptions of the sacred such as the Toronto Blessing (see www.tacf.org), and gatherings of consumption tribes. Finally, spontaneous shrineing refers to the consecration of the self, often expressed through self-indexical possession meanings (Grayson and Shulman 2000), one of the differentiating elements of the sacred in post-modernity.

"The Gold that Binds: The Ritualistic Use of Jewelry in An Indian Wedding"

Karen V. Fernandez and Ekant Veer

Fernandez and Veer use depth interviews and participant observation of a Hindu wedding to examine the bi-directional transfer of meaning between jewelry and extended family in the wedding ritual. They show the wearing of gifted and borrowed

jewelry is part of a boundary crossing ritual whereby the bride is purified and crosses the threshold of the groom's extended family. The sources (functional, indexical and spiritual) and loci of meaning (private and public) of the jewelry are used to co-create a continuum of sacred meanings that become part of the legacy of the jewelry as each successive bride wears it. The authors have published an extended version of their paper in the current volume of *Advances in Consumer Research*.

"Jewelry—Passing Along the Continuum of Sacred and Profane Meanings"

Cathy L. Hartman and Pamela Kiecker

This paper examines sacred and profane meaning as a cycle evidenced in the life stages or biography of jewelry. The diverse perspectives of jewelry manufacturers, retailers, purchasers, and owners are represented, offering rich insights into the meanings associated with jewelry, which are as individual as those who create, sell, buy, possess, and/or re-fashion the pieces. The creation of meaning is viewed through Kopytoff's (1986) process of commoditization. A jewelry piece begins its "life" with its fabrication by jewelers and other artists, passing through retail jewelry sellers, to its acquisition by consumers via purchase, gifting, inheritance, and potential re-creation and entry into a new cycle of meaning.

The study uses depth interviews with jewelry manufacturers/jewelry artists, jewelry retailers, and jewelry owners to explore the variety of meanings associated with individual pieces of jewelry that are intended for both sacred and profane purposes. Insights from the interviews suggest that the lifecycle of jewelry may contain a continuum of symbolisms, representing varying degrees of the sacred and the profane, at different times.

Interviews include (1) a "creator" of sacred pieces—an artist who sees her jewelry creations as "heritage" pieces and strives to personalize each piece to its owner to solidify its sacredness; (2) a "bridger" of sacred pieces—a retailer of vintage pieces who may or may not know the specific sacred history of jewelry but "sees" their sacredness and makes special, personal connections with her customers to ensure that the sacredness of each piece is retained; (3) owners (and the jewelers and retailers involved in their acquisition of goods) who variously create, maintain, and restore the sacred and/or profane nature of jewelry pieces, including a divorced woman who has a cocktail ring made from her wedding/engagement rings, a mother who creates identical rings from her own heritage piece to leave to her two daughters upon her death, and a young couple who "build" their future together with a ring that represents a special part of both of their pasts.

Each story traces the lifecycle of meanings running along the sacred/profane continuum and teaches us more about the power of possessions in communicating meaning throughout our lives. Analysis over the course of jewelry's post-purchase lifecycle leads the authors to recognize several ways in which consumers' productive behavior leads to modifications in the dichotomous portrayal of the sacred and profane. Consumers' productive behaviors move items between the spheres of sacred and profane that in classic formulations are supposed to be insulated from each other. Consumers' productive behaviors, or undertaken by jewelers on their behalf, may convert formally unconvertible profane items into sacred ones. Data also shows there is considerable reorganizing and reshuffling between the spheres. For example, profane items may be restored to sacred status through the intervention of jewelers. Sacred items at risk of profanation may be preserved through jewelers' enhancements.

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The Gold that Binds: The Ritualistic Use of Jewelry in A Hindu Wedding

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Gold jewelry is deeply woven into the social, cultural and religious fabric of Indian Hindu ("Hindu") life. In most Hindu communities, gold forms an indispensable part of the jewelry that bedecks a bride (Shukla 2000) as she undergoes the rituals that will incorporate her into her groom's family. Since weddings are the major cultural performance of every Hindu family (Kolenda 1984), we examined the ritualistic use of gold jewelry in weddings to develop insights into the Hindu perspective of possession meaning. We synthesized the relevant literature with data from fifteen depth interviews before, during, and after participant-observation of the Hindu wedding of "Lisa" (WF22) to "Sanjay" (IM22). The longitudinal nature of the data collection engendered a temporal perspective of Lisa's journey into a Hindu extended family.

We found that gold jewelry carries functional meaning for Hindu consumers, as a store of wealth and as a way to conform to social norms of respectability (Gell 1986). It can also function as a private and public display of status within and without the extended family (Minturn 1993). A second source of meaning is indexical meaning, wherein it serves as a link to extended family (Mehta and Belk 1991). Both these categories of meaning resonate with the Western perspective of jewelry. However, Hindu culture differs from Western culture in the shared importance placed on the spiritual values that permeate Hindu life and imbue symbolic meaning into objects (Venkatesh 1995). Gold jewelry carries spiritual meaning that underlies its use as a ritual artifact as the bride crosses the threshold of the extended family. As jewelry is lent or given to each new bride that enters the extended family, the jewelry grows heavier with nuanced meaning that becomes part of the legacy of the jewelry.

We explored the nuances of meaning inherent in the purity of the gold used, in the value and nature of the gold given, and in the differences between "pure" (an emic term for 22 carat gold which has 91.7% gold content) and "heavy" gold jewelry (an emic term describing traditionally-styled, inherited jewelry). Since cultural perspectives of corporeal boundaries are affected by social structure (Douglas 1966), it seems plausible to suggest that relationships with meaningful possessions such as jewelry are also affected by the social order. While the popular perception of caste is that it embodies a set of hereditary hierarchical occupational groups, what truly underlies caste is a continuum of pure and polluted states (Douglas 1966). Just as a member of an intermediate caste is less pure than one from a higher order caste, but purer than one from a lower order caste, there can be intermediate states between sacred and profane (Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry 1989). For example, we found that jewelry of made of less than 22 carat gold was profane, "pure" gold was quite sacred, and "heavy" gold was extremely sacred.

Furthermore, we found evidence to support the contention that cultural categories of purity and auspiciousness (Das 1982) clarify how rituals protect extended family from the dangers of liminality (Turner 1967). Traditionally, an unmarried Hindu woman was viewed as liminal, and hence dangerous to patrilineal, patrilocal kinship system which characterizes most Hindu communities (Kolenda 1984). In this view, she remains liminal until she completely transcends the boundary into an extended family, usually upon the birth of a son (Minturn 1981). Gifted and borrowed jewelry plays an indispensable role in the ritual purification and

transformation of the bride from an 'other', commoditized, female into part of the bridegroom's extended self and subsequent incorporation into the sacred domain of the extended family. The gold jewelry worn by the bride has sacred meanings based in notions of auspiciousness that persist, even if a negative, indexical meaning profanes the possession. However, Hindu consumers seem comfortable with the temporal co-existence of sacred and profane meanings.

The polysemous meanings of the gold jewelry reflect cross-cultural differences in the sacred and the profane. The sources (functional, indexical and spiritual) and loci of meaning (private and public) of the jewelry used co-create subtle shades of sacred meanings. This indicates that, contrary to classical Durkheimian perspective, sacred and profane are not dichotomous categories for Hindu consumers. We also found that some meanings (e.g. functional meanings) could be profane, while other meanings (e.g. spiritual meanings) could be sacred. In contrast to the prevalent dialectical perspective of sacred and profane, sacred and profane meanings in Hindu culture are not antithetical: sacred and profane meanings can and do co-exist temporally in possessions.

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Satisfaction and Participation in Virtual Communities

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

One of the most interesting phenomena since the introduction of computer-mediated communication is the virtual community. Virtual communities can bring together individuals from all over the world who are interested in the same subject. Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002, p.3) define virtual communities (VCs) as "...mediated social spaces in the digital environment that allow groups to form and be sustained primarily through ongoing communication processes." VCs are formed around a broad range of topics varying from religion to sex, from music to money, and from trivial to serious. Within these communities members may obtain or provide information, share their experiences, and even develop relationships.

Although VCs are amongst the most visited websites, in most instances, financial viability is low (Balasubramanian and Mahajan 2001). Because of the seemingly endless stream of new VC-initiatives, a key factor for success is generating member satisfaction, repeat visits and active participation in order to create a community that offers value to both its users and administrators. However, the issue of e-satisfaction and loyalty has only been addressed for Internet environments in general (e.g., Szymanski and Hise 2000; Reibstein 2002; Wolfenbarger and Gilly 2002; Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhotra 2002), and not for VCs specifically. Due to the differences in structure between VCs and other e-business models, results may not be generalized.

To date, no studies have focused on the measurement of satisfaction within VCs and its impact on member participation. We draw on: (1) sociological and marketing literature on communities; (2) e-commerce literature, and; (3) customer satisfaction literature, to develop a four-dimensional conceptualization of members' satisfaction with virtual community interaction and to investigate the effect of each satisfaction dimension on member participation.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

We used qualitative research to identify four essential elements describing the interaction structure within VCs: (1) interactions between the members; (2) interactions between the organizer and individual members; (3) interactions of the organizer with the community as a whole, and; (4) the community site that facilitates interaction between all constituents. We propose that satisfaction with VC-interaction is based on satisfaction with each of these interaction elements. In doing so, we assume that satisfaction with VC-interaction is a multi-dimensional construct (cf., Bolton and Drew 1994).

In our study, we explain member participation in the VC. Member participation refers to the amount of time a member spends in the community. It is operationalized as visit frequency and duration. In line with prior research in which satisfaction is found to positively affect service usage (Bolton and Lemon 1999), we expect that all four components of VC-interaction satisfaction are positively related to the level of member participation in the VC (H_1).

When members first enter a VC, they are not familiar yet with the environment, the other members, and the "rules of the game".

As a result, they have fewer social ties and are to a lesser extent embedded in the community (Walther 1995; Kozinets 1999). Compared to experienced members, novices lack knowledge needed to participate in the social interaction within the community. Their visits will therefore be mainly aimed at retrieving information. Over time, this lack of knowledge is overcome. Members are increasingly able to use the VC not only for topical information, but also for social and symbolic exchanges. Participation becomes more valuable, thus members spend more and more time in the community. Hence, we expect that membership length has a positive effect on member participation (H_{2a}).

Social interactions among members develop and deepen over time. Besides, they are self-reinforcing, i.e., the value of each interaction increases with the number of interactions that precede it (Frenzen and Davis 1990). This may be represented by a positive quadratic effect of membership length on member participation. Thus, we expect that the positive effect of membership length on participation becomes stronger as membership length increases (H_{2b}).

Methodology

To test the hypotheses, we conducted a survey among 73,851 registered members of a VC aimed at youngsters (12-24 years). Topics of interest include dating, music, school, games, television, and jobs. Interaction takes place by means of boards, forums, email, personal web pages and chat. The community's content is mainly generated by its members. The administrator acts as a moderator (e.g., filtering out racial comments). Commercial exploitation is limited. The survey resulted in 3,605 usable responses.

Items for measuring our constructs were generated using literature search, free-form interviews and online discussions. After pre-testing, we measured the four dimensions of VC-interaction satisfaction using twenty-eight items. Responses were recorded on Likert scales. Membership length, visit frequency and visit duration were assessed by self-reports using fixed categories. We used standard procedures and structural equation modeling to assess our measures' psychometric properties.

Results

The results of OLS regression analysis show that members' satisfaction with member-member interactions, organizer-member interactions, and the community site have a positive and significant effect on member participation. Members' satisfaction with organizer-community interactions has no significant effect. Hence, H_1 is supported for three of the four dimensions of VC-interaction satisfaction. The results further reveal that both the linear and quadratic effect of membership length on participation were positive and significant, which supports H_{2a} and H_{2b} .

Discussion

Our study highlights the complexity of conceptualizing satisfaction within VCs. This is evident from the support we obtained for our proposition that VC-interaction satisfaction is a four-dimensional construct of which the origin lies in the complex nature of the interaction structures within VCs. Against this background the use of a single item to measure satisfaction with VC-interaction seems

inadequate. Additionally, our study sheds some light on the effect of satisfaction with VC-interaction and membership length on member participation. The findings underscore that satisfaction within VCs should be viewed as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Moreover, results highlight the importance of long-time members for maintaining viable VCs. More research into other aspects of participation, such as online behavior, is needed for a more complete understanding of satisfaction effects. Besides, our study should be replicated with members of other VCs, that vary in size, uniqueness, target audience etc., before results can be generalized.

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Online Investing: Derealization and the Experience of Risk

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this paper we set out to show that the Internet causes a disruption in traditional patterns of online investors' perception, resulting in, what Lyng (1990) calls, *edgework*: a desire to experience risk as an end in itself. The perceptual disruption caused by the Internet is a function of two distinct yet interrelated processes: virtualization and derealization (Virilio, 2000). Virtualization denotes the process of substituting reality with virtual representations, including money, the practice of trading, companies, and even the Self. Because of this progressive virtualization of its key components, the entire investing experience seems increasingly *unreal* (derealization). It is only after the phenomenon of online investing has been derealized in the mind of the investor that it emerges as site *par excellence* for voluntary high risk-taking behavior, transforming its purpose from maximizing risk-adjusted returns to maximizing the experience of risk for its own sake.

Our model is the result of an analysis of 35 long, phenomenological interviews (Kvale, 1983; McCracken, 1988; Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989) with 25 informants between the summer of 2000 and the fall of 2002. This study is part of a larger project that pursues two interrelated goals. First, we want to go beyond quantitative analyses and instead concern ourselves with questions of perception, experience, and meaning related to individual online investing. Here, we follow an emerging stream of research in behavioral finance (McGoun, 1996, 1997), anthropology (Conley & O'Barr, 1992; O'Barr & Conley, 1992), and consumer behavior (Allen, McGoun, & Kester, 2000; Allen & McGoun, 2000) that seeks to overcome some of the limitations of financial and economic research by looking at investing as a meaningful social practice and a significant cultural expression.

Second, we wish to extend our understanding of the role and effect of the Internet on online consumer behavior. To date, such discussions have borrowed exclusively from the field of communication theory, pointing mainly to the Internet's interactive nature as well as its many-to-many broadcasting capability (e.g., Hoffman & Novak, 1996, 1997; Kozinets, 2002). While such approaches add much to our understanding of online consumer behavior, they fail to address both, the medium's facility to alter familiar patterns of human perception and the effects of altered perceptions on consumer behavior. We therefore borrow from media and literary theory to propose that the Internet intervenes in human nature in important ways (cf. Benjamin, 1968; Virilio, 1989, 2000). For the purposes of this paper we focus on the *perception of reality* and how its disruption through communication technologies might influence consumer dispositions and actions.

Our research also adds to an existing body of knowledge in the field of behavioral finance. Barber and Odean (1999) and Odean (1999) have shown that investors who move their stock trading activity online trade more and have a tendency to buy more risky stocks. Such results suggest, contrary to traditional economic and finance theory, that the medium used for trading has an effect on trading habits. Yet, precisely what this effect might be has remained unclear because such research would require an analysis of the medium itself. Our research closes this gap by demonstrating that perceptual disruptions caused by the Internet affect online investment behavior in ways observed by behavioral finance scholars. Therefore, by illuminating the effect of the medium on investors' perceptual horizon, our model adds to our understanding of online trading and online consumption more generally.

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Exploring Impulse Purchasing on the Internet

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the concept of impulse purchasing behavior online. A comprehensive review and analysis of the literature suggests that there are some unresolved issues regarding the state of knowledge on impulse purchasing behavior. In addition, the current conceptualizations of impulse purchase behavior do not adequately capture impulse purchase behavior over the Internet. Therefore, we propose a broadened conceptualization to resolve those issues and to accurately capture impulse purchases that take place in retail stores as well as on the Internet. The results of our exploratory study are consistent with our conceptualization, and present a robust platform for future research.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of understanding impulse purchasing in retail stores was first identified in the marketing literature over fifty years ago (Clover 1950). Impulse purchasing accounts for a substantial percentage of the products sold across a broad range of product categories (Colb and Hoyer 1986; Hausman 2000; Rook and Fischer 1995). Research on impulse buying has been based on varying conceptual definitions of the construct and has focused primarily on in-store retailing. In this article we attempt to broaden the concept of impulse buying and explore impulse buying on the Internet. With the prominence of online retailing it would seem appropriate to expand the concept of impulse purchasing to accurately capture impulse purchasing behavior online as well as in stores.

A number of researchers have made important contributions to our understanding of impulse purchasing behavior (Stern 1962; Rook and Hoch 1985; Rook 1987; Rook and Gardner 1993; Rook and Fisher 1987; Puri 1996; Weun and Beatty 1998; Beatty and Ferrell 1998; Hausman 2000). Stern (1962) identified four distinct types of impulse purchasing: planned, pure, reminder, and suggestion. Our understanding of impulse purchasing was enhanced when Rook and Hoch (1985) offered a psychological model of consumer impulse buying episodes. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) extended research by exploring the precursors of impulse purchasing and examining how in-store browsing, for recreational and informational purposes, influences impulse purchasing behavior. Recently, Hausman (2000) established that impulse buying is a common method of product selection, in part, because it provides hedonic rewards. Though, this research has made significant contributions to our understanding of impulse purchasing, researchers have not come to a consensus on the conceptualization of impulse purchasing. Thus, unresolved issues exist in the literature preventing a clear understanding and resulting in inconsistent operationalization of the construct.

Understanding of impulse purchasing is further confounded by the prevalence of online retailing, an easily available mode for making impulse purchases. Online retailing eliminates the constraints of time and space that often face shoppers (Kalakota and Whinston 1997; Eroglu, Machleit, and Davis 2001). Recently, Donthu and Garcia (1999) profiled Internet shoppers and found that Internet shoppers are more impulsive than in-store shoppers. However, consumer behavior on the Internet is not well understood (Sultan 2002). Thus, in this article we explore how to improve and broaden the concept of impulse purchasing and examine impulsive purchasing behavior online.

The purpose of this paper is to: (1) review and analyze extant research, and to broaden the concept of impulse buying in order to comprehensively account for impulse purchases over the Internet as well as in traditional retail stores; (2) identify specific unresolved issues that have relevance to the broadened conceptualization of impulse buying; (3) present exploratory research findings on consumers' descriptions of their impulse buying behavior online; and, (4) discuss conceptual implications and direction for future research.

IMPULSE BUYING

A decade after Clover's (1950) preliminary research study on impulse purchases, Stern (1962) delineated four distinct types of impulse buying: pure, reminder, suggestion, and planned impulse buying:

- (i) *Pure impulse buying: is a novelty or escape purchase which breaks a normal buying pattern*
- (ii) *Reminder impulse buying: occurs when a shopper sees an item or recalls an advertisement or other information and remembers that the stock at home is low or exhausted*
- (iii) *Suggestion impulse buying: occurs when a shopper sees a product for the first time and visualizes a need for it, and*
- (iv) *Planned impulse buying: takes place when the shopper makes specific purchase decisions on the basis of price specials, coupon offers and the like.*

Stern's (1962) contribution is quite significant, because even today most research studies use his concept of impulse purchases as a starting point (Beatty and Ferrell 1998, Dittmar et al. 1996; Han et al. 1991; Rook 1987).

Applebaum (1951) introduced the notion of exposure to stimulus into the concept of impulse buying, and defined impulse buying as "buying that presumably was not planned by the customer before entering a store, but which resulted from a stimulus created by a sales promotional device in the store". Although this was an improvement over the earlier definition, it was still a limited definition because the stimulus that Applebaum (1951) discusses is restricted to sales promotional devices in the store which the consumer could be using as an external memory aid. Over time, researchers began to look at consumer characteristics rather than product characteristics or stimuli as it was agreed that impulse purchasing is not confined to any particular product or product category (Rook 1987). The hedonic or affective components of this type of purchasing became central in many studies (Cobb and Hoyer 1986; Piron 1991; Rook 1987; Weinburg and Gottwald 1982). Rook (1987) reported that consumers often felt a calling to purchase the product.

As researchers began to focus on the behavioral dimensions of impulse buying they moved away from viewing impulse buying as an unplanned purchase. Rook and Hoch (1985) state the growing consensus among researchers when they suggest that defining impulse purchasing as unplanned is neither a sufficient condition nor a necessary condition for construal as an impulse purchase, since consumers clearly use store layout as external memory aid. In fact, consumers may plan impulse buys. Rook (1987) discusses situations wherein consumers have occasionally described how they plan to go on impulse buying excursions.

Rook (1987) suggests impulse buying occurs:

when a consumer experiences a sudden, often persistent urge to buy something immediately. The impulse to buy is hedonically complex and may stimulate emotional conflict. Also, impulse buying is prone to occur with diminished regard for its consequences (p. 191).

This definition has acquired much wider acceptance than the other previously discussed definitions. However, many have viewed impulse buying negatively, perhaps due to the lack of perceived behavioral control that is associated with impulsivity (Hausman 2000). Recently, consumer research suggests that individual consumers do not view their specific purchases as wrong and indeed retrospectively report a favorable evaluation of their behavior (Hausman 2000). Interestingly, Rook (1987) reports a relatively low number of informants (only 20 percent) report feeling “bad” about their impulse buying, but an astonishingly large number of informants (41 percent) report that they actually feel good about their impulse purchases, which is ironic as the definition does not accommodate for such behavior.

Piron (1991) argues Rook’s definition is too narrow since it implies that emotional and cognitive reactions must accompany the purchase, because whether or not customer experiences emotional and cognitive reactions may depend on the economic, personality, and cultural factors on behalf of the customer and characteristics and price on behalf of the product. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) overcome the issues in Rook’s definition that Piron (1991) argues are problematic. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) state that:

Impulse buying is a sudden and immediate purchase with no pre-shopping intentions either to buy the specific product category or to fulfill a specific buying task. The behavior occurs after experiencing an urge to buy and it tends to be spontaneous and without a lot of reflection (i.e. it is “impulsive”). It does not include the purchase of a simple reminder item, which is an item that is simply out-of-stock at home (p. 171).

Similar to Rook’s (1987) definition this definition does not consider the role of stimuli in the impulse purchase decision. While early impulse purchase research focused on the product as stimuli, it is likely that advertisements, articles and word of mouth can act as stimuli. In the following section we will discuss issues that we argue are unresolved yet important in understanding impulse buying.

Considering that (1) there is a consensus among researchers that defining impulse purchasing as simply unplanned purchasing is faulty (Rook and Hoch 1985) (Unplanned purchases of milk, candy, and toilet paper may be triggered by a reminder and are not impulsive purchases); (2) definitions of impulse purchasing are too narrowly focused on either emotional and cognitive reactions (Piron 1991) or the unplanned element (Rook and Hoch 1985); (3) most conceptualizations do not account for impulse purchases online; we propose the following conceptualization of impulse purchasing:

Impulse buying is a result of a purchaser’s immediate reaction to external stimuli that is often hedonically charged. An impulse buying episode signifies a change in purchaser’s intention to purchase that particular product before and after the exposure to stimuli. The stimuli is not limited to just the product and change in purchaser’s intention does not include a reminder item that is simply out of stock at home.

The definition takes into account Wolman’s (1973) definition of impulse: not consciously planned, but arises immediately upon confrontation with a certain stimulus. The definition also broadens the exposure to “stimulus” element by mentioning that the stimulus need not be just the product, and thereby accommodates impulse purchases on the Internet. This definition improves upon the earlier definitions by bringing in an element of “change-in-intentions” into the concept of impulse purchases. Finally, the definition incorporates the hedonic elements that likely accompany an impulse decision. This definition takes into account that brand switching and purchasing substitute products could sometimes be impulse purchases.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES IN THE IMPULSE PURCHASING LITERATURE

Stimuli

In the original conceptualization of impulse purchasing, the notion of the product as stimuli was a very important part of the definitions of types of impulse purchases. Applebaum (1951) suggested that impulse purchasing might stem from the consumer’s exposure to sales promotion stimulus. Wolman (1973) defines an impulse as not consciously planned, but arises upon confrontation with a certain stimulus. Kroeber–Reil (1980) also argues that impulse buying is reactive behavior and often involves an immediate action response to a stimulus. Impulse purchasing may occur as a result of marketer’s environmental manipulations through atmospherics (Kotler 1974), merchandising stimuli such as retail shelf location (Rook, 1987), and amount of shelf space affected impulse buying (Cox 1964; Patterson 1963). Yet, Rook’s (1987) definition focuses on the consumer and does not mention explicitly what causes that sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. However, it is implied at various places in his research that the product itself acts as stimulus. Rook (1987) suggests that consumers have the most difficult time resisting the urge in the moments following the encounter with the object and the consuming impulse originates from within the product (Rook and Hoch 1985). Others have considered the product itself to be the stimulus effecting impulse purchases research (Weun et al. 1998) and link browsing to urge and impulse buying (Beatty and Ferrell 1998).

While some research focused on the product as stimulus, certainly other factors can trigger impulse purchasing. One possible reason for researchers treating product as being the only stimulus is probably one of the greatest advantages that a traditional physical retailing store can offer: the ability to personally experience a product on a multisensory basis (Alba et al. 1997; Rosen and Howard 2000). As Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) mention, one aspect of hedonic consumption is the experience of products through their tastes, sounds, tactile impressions, and visual images. But, Childers et al. (2001) suggest, if shoppers believe that the sensory information available via the interactive media is sufficient, there is reason to believe that the shoppers will enjoy using the new media for web-shopping. Following Kotler’s (1974) observation that impulse purchasing may occur as a result of marketer’s environmental manipulations through atmospherics, there is a possibility that “webmospherics” which according to Childers et al. (2001) represents the virtual environment counterpart to the physical surroundings associated with the retail atmosphere (such as graphics, text, pop-up windows, search engine configuration, audio, color, streaming video, and organization and grouping of merchandise), may lead to impulse buying.

One plausible reason for some researchers’ conceptualizing the product as the only stimulus that can cause impulse purchases,

could be their perception that a purchase decision made immediately upon exposure to a stimulus other than the product, but away from the point-of-purchase, can translate either into a planned purchase or into a rescinded purchase decision. But, is product the only stimulus that invokes the impulse that will immediately lead to a purchase? Danthu and Garcia (1999) imply the contrary and say that Internet shoppers are more impulsive due to the stimuli to which they are exposed to. Within a store environment the stimuli that effect impulse purchases could be something other than the product. Stern (1962) implied that stimulus could be something other than the product itself when he concluded that the tone of in-store advertising may change in the light of increased impulse buying and explained that signs, pole cards, and the like may serve less as attention seekers and provide more information and explanation. The stimuli may be an image, a description in an email, a banner advertisement, an article in a magazine or on the Internet, and a sign. In sum, research based on just the product being the stimulus is inadequate to capture the phenomenon of impulse purchases.

Consumer Focus

Early research on impulse purchases classified products as impulse versus non-impulse items. Most studies investigated frequencies of impulse buying across various product categories (Applebaum 1951; Clover 1950; Katona and Mueller 1955; West 1951) and in different retail settings (Clover 1950). Even today, impulse buying is still discussed in terms of which products are and are not impulse items (Assael 1985; Bellenger et al. 1978; Dittmar et al. 1996; Dittmar and Drury 2000). However, Rook and Hoch (1985) argued that placing sole emphasis upon product type provides a limited perspective, since it is the individuals, not the products, who experience the impulse to consume. Cobb and Hoyer (1986) also state that in the process of focusing on the influence of type of product and type of outlet, investigators have not considered adequately the influence of consumer characteristics on impulse purchase behavior.

Although their definitions of impulse purchases are very different, both Kollat and Willett (1967) and Rook (1987) agree that impulse purchasing is not confined to any particular product or product type. In fact, Kollat and Willett (1967) state that the impulse-purchasing phenomenon has been used to describe purchases of such products as: durable goods (Katona and Mueller 1955); jewelry, apparel, hardware items, furniture (Clover 1950); drugs and toiletries (Drugstore Brand Switching and Impulse Buying 1963); and grocery products (West 1951; Stern 1962; Consumer buying habits studies 1945, 1949, 1954, 1959, 1965). Similarly, Rook (1987) argues that the product dimensions of impulse buying extend well beyond snack items and gossip magazines. He argues that impulse buying extends to the outer limits of one's cash and credit and can likely include an extra TV set, a VCR, or a vacation cruise (Rook 1987). Most researchers agreed that the taxonomical research that classified products into impulse and non-impulse categories is too limited in perspective and fails to focus on the consumer. But does that mean that classification should be based on people (i.e., impulsive and non-impulsive consumers)?

Psychological theory and research has long considered "impulsiveness" to be a personality trait (Freud 1949; Goldenson 1984; Kipnis 1971; Mead 1981; Phypers 1979; Reich 1925; Winshie 1977). This notion was adopted in consumer research (Rook 1987; Rook and Gardner 1993; Rook and Hoch 1985). In addition, studies drew from this idea and developed an instrument to measure consumer impulsivity as a lifestyle trait (Heslin and Johnson 1985; Weun et al. 1998). The scale is designed to measure impulsive buying tendency.

Hence, just as categorizing products into impulsive and non-impulsive products is a limited perspective; similarly categorizing people as impulsive and non-impulsive consumers presents a limited perspective. According to Welles (1986), there is evidence that nine out of ten shoppers occasionally buy on impulse. As the person and product both are involved in the purchase process, studying impulse purchase behavior with strictly product or strictly person orientation puts forward a limited perspective. However, if our understanding of the concept of impulse purchases can be improved either through product or person orientation, then the researchers should definitely investigate according to the appropriate orientations.

Mood and Affect

In an effort to improve our understanding of the impulse-purchasing construct researchers have explored how mood states (Gardner and Rook 1988; Rook 1987), in-store browsing (Beatty and Ferrell 1998), and positive and negative affect (Beatty and Ferrell 1998) influence impulse purchases. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) draw parallels between their utilization of orthogonal constructs of positive and negative affect and the positive and negative moods addressed by Rook and Gardner (1993).

Rook and Gardner (1993) undertook an exploratory study of the mood antecedents of impulse buying after observing that findings from other lines of research demonstrate that mood states, despite their diffuse and short-lived nature, impact both consumers' mental and overt behaviors (Belk 1984; Gardner 1985, 1987). Rook and Gardner (1993) propose that each of the three basic mood dimensions (pleasure, arousal, and dominance) is associated with a primary core theme that either supports or dissuades consumer's buying impulses. They suggest pleasure is associated with motivation; arousal is associated with mobilization; and, dominance is associated with capability. Rook and Gardner (1993) suggest that a mood state sufficiently motivates consumption, mobilizes a transaction, or induces a subjective sense of capability to do so, generates psychological associations that increase the likelihood of making a purchase.

Pleasurable moods range from positive to negative and can either motivate or demotivate a buying impulse (Rook and Gardner 1993). Similarly, Beatty and Ferrell (1998) argue positive affect is related to in-store browsing, examining a retailer's merchandise for recreational and/or informational purposes without an immediate intent to buy. Furthermore, impulse buying has been related to hedonic motivations, such as fun, novelty and surprise (Hausman 2000).

It seems likely that exploring consumers' responses to online retailing can shed light on the influence of mood states on impulse purchasing. In-store browsing on the Internet is easy and consumers can examine the on-line retailer's merchandise for recreational and/or informational purposes without an immediate intent to buy in the comfort of their home. Drawing from the findings of Beatty and Ferrell (1998), browsing is often related to positive affect. Browsing is related to activation and the mobilization of the mental and physical resources that a particular impulse purchase requires (Rook and Gardner 1993). They claim that a vast majority of their survey respondents indicated a positive mood would be more conducive to impulse buying than a negative mood. However the effects of negative moods on behavior are unclear. Sometimes they produce effects similar to those produced by positive moods, while at other times they produce opposite effects (Clark and Isen 1982). In sum, whether a person is in a positive mood or in a negative mood, the Internet makes it easy to browse the merchandise and also minimizes the expenditure of physical and mental resources, and hence goes long way toward motivating the buying impulse.

The traditional focus on impulse purchasing as unplanned purchasing is especially problematic when considering online purchasing. By focusing on the consumer and hedonic dimensions, we can better understand what motivates consumers to engage in shopping online and online impulse purchases. Online retailers create an immersive, hedonic environment that is seen as a positive shopping environment by many consumers (Childers et al. 2001) with many atmospheric cues that influence shopping behavior (Eroglu, Machleit and Davis 2002). From this perspective, the addition of hedonic components suggests that impulse buying can be viewed as a valued shopping behavior rather than just a means of acquiring unplanned goods (Hausman 2000).

EXPLORATORY STUDY

This study explored the concept of impulse purchasing in the context of Internet purchases. Due to the exploratory nature of our proposed conceptualization, this research used an open-ended paper and pencil approach. We set out to: (1) to discover what consumers associate with impulse purchases, (2) to explore elements that influence impulse purchases on the Internet, (3) to investigate what kinds of stimuli cause impulse purchases on the Internet.

This research is exploratory in nature since it was established in the earlier sections of this paper that extant research falls short of providing an accurate account of impulse purchases; an exploratory design that prioritizes discovery over confirmation is more appropriate (Kaplan 1964; Deshpande 1983). Similar to Rook and Gardner's (1993) observation on impulse buying, since online impulse buying research is relatively immature, conceptually driven exploratory studies are still appropriate (cf. Anderson 1983; Deshpande 1983; Peter and Olson 1983) and qualitative inquiry can also elicit new or different issues of concern to respondents overlooked in previous work. More specifically, this study proposes to explore impulse purchasing on the Internet, while clarifying the unresolved conceptual and exposure to stimulus issues concerning impulse purchases.

Method

This study is based on data collected using a self-administered screening questionnaire followed by an in-depth questionnaire. The initial questionnaire consisted of an open-ended question that asked the respondents define impulse purchases in their own words and questions that asked respondents to describe impulse purchases they had made on the Internet. The open-ended question on defining impulse purchase was included to gain insights into consumer's understanding of an impulse purchase. The respondents were asked to describe purchases that they had made on the Internet and to respond to some questions regarding those purchases.

The informants who had made purchases on-line formed a convenience sample of consumers who made an impulse purchase on the Internet according to their definitions; they then completed an in-depth questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions aimed at exploring the characteristics associated with impulse purchases online and clarifying the unresolved issues with impulse purchases.

Results

The 263 respondents each described how they defined an impulse purchase. The definitions were content analyzed to obtain insight into how consumers define impulse purchases. A summary of the categories that emerged from the content analysis appears in Table 1. Approximately, 22% of the respondents (57 out of 263) made impulse purchases on the Internet. The respondents' understanding of impulse purchases is consistent with our conceptualization. The major characteristics that emerged were:

unplanned, response to stimulus, change in intentions and spontaneous reaction. Almost, all of the respondents, who made impulse purchases on the Internet, browsed the Internet for both informational and recreational purposes. It can also be clearly seen that the new definition by introducing the concepts of "exposure to stimuli other than product", and "change of purchaser's intention" accommodates for impulse purchases in traditional retail stores and also on the Internet.

Consistent with extant research (Kollat and Willett 1967; Rook 1987), respondents showed that impulse purchasing is not confined to any particular product or product type. The impulse purchases of the respondents included products such as CDs, clothing, cosmetics, DVDs, shoes, books, toys, car air filter, computer, computer hardware, amplifiers, golf equipment, life jacket, wet suit, printer, and so on.

Respondents were asked to describe stimuli that influenced their impulse purchases on the Internet. See Table 2 for a summary of the responses. The responses demonstrate that images, banner advertisements, price, and special offers can all be stimuli for impulse purchases. Most of the respondents also indicated that there was a hedonic element related to a good mood would be more conducive to impulse purchasing and Internet browsing. Statements suggest good moods are conducive to shopping on-line. However, some respondents expressed that they are indifferent to moods while browsing or shopping and a few have also mentioned that they are more prone to impulse purchasing when in a bad mood. Hence, the concepts of in-store browsing, online browsing, and mood states potentially could become increasingly relevant to understanding impulse purchasing behavior.

In our data collection, we also attempted to explore consumers' perception of shopping online versus in stores. See Table 3 for a summary of responses. In addition, concerns with purchasing in online retail stores such as security, credit card information, delivery, and inability to use sensory organs with products could inhibit consumers from impulse purchases online. Efforts on part of online retailers to convince the potential customers in specific, and everyone in general that the above concerns can be taken care of with sufficient technology and better service could help increase the confidence of potential customers to shop over the Internet.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of online retailing and diffusion of marketing innovations (Rook 1987; Rook and Gardner 1993) such as 24-hour retailing, telemarketing "cash machines", "instant credit", and home shopping networks make it increasingly easy for consumers to purchase products. As Stern (1962) pointed out, ease of buying is likely to increase impulse purchasing. Hence this paper has sought to analyze the extant research for unresolved issues and shortcomings, and broaden the concept of Impulse purchases to accurately capture all kinds of impulse purchase in the stores as well on the online.

The results of this exploratory study are consistent with the broadened conceptualization of impulse purchase behavior. The concept of "Exposure to Stimulus" is analyzed in detail and is broadened to include stimuli other than the product itself. This is important because if research is centered on product being the only stimulus and assumes that only physical proximity leads to impulse purchases then it fails to account for impulse purchases on the Internet. The findings suggest that impulse purchases exist on the Internet, and there are "stimuli other than the product", that cause the eventual impulse purchases.

Conforming with the analysis provided earlier in this paper, it is established that a strictly product or people orientation of impulse purchasing behavior is problematic as most people at one time or

TABLE 1
Impulse purchases online

1. Respondents' understanding of impulse purchases (n=263)	Relevant Components: Unplanned, un-researched 75% Response to stimuli 55% Change in intentions 43% Spontaneous / Immediate Reactions 66%
2. Of all the respondents,	Proportion who made impulse purchases over the Internet 22%
3. Of those who made impulse purchases over the Internet,	Proportion who made impulse purchases in a traditional retail store 100%
4. Of those who made impulse purchases over the Internet,	Proportion who browse for recreational purposes 97% Proportion who browse for informational purposes 100%

TABLE 2
External stimuli and mood influences of impulse purchases online

Relevant Issues with online impulse purchases	Sample answers by category
1. Stimuli responsible for impulse purchases over the Internet	Virtual customization of the product Reading the copy and viewing the graphics Appeal of the product, the extra discount that was given Ads on the Internet, or friend mention it, looks, benefits of having that product Advertisement on the web page Clicked on banner and ended up purchasing The product just jumped at me and said BUY ME, BUY ME NOW I liked what I saw Price Great price, couldn't have bought the item for less in town URLs in magazines Brother's suggestion Sales price, good deal
2. Influence of mood states impulse purchases over the Internet	Mood doesn't matter I am more apt to shop when in a good mood Good mood will make me want to buy something More carefree when in good mood Because I feel like doing something fun and exciting I feel better and willing to shop Feel like I need to buy something to better my mood...it gets your mind off things I really don't think my mood affects purchasing I don't think it matters Bad mood- don't feel like waiting for pages and pictures to browse or look through Mood is not a factor

another indulges in impulse purchases (Welles 1986). The findings are consistent with the problems that exist with strictly product or strictly people orientation of impulse purchasing behavior. However, the importance of avoiding speculation and accurately profiling impulsive and non-impulsive products if they so exist is noted for the purposes of better understanding the concept of Impulse purchases.

In addition, this paper incorporates variables such as in-store browsing (Beatty and Ferrell 1998), mood states (Rook and Gardner 1993) that influence impulse purchases. We then theoretically extended the application of these variables to impulse purchases on the Internet, as online retailing makes it easier for people to browse and respond to their respective mood states. The results support that both in-store browsing and mood states influence impulse pur-

TABLE 3
Impressions of online retailing

Relevant Issues with online retail stores	Sample answers
<p>1. Differences between traditional retail stores and online retail stores</p>	<p>Quality/Experience with the product Can tell quality when in a store In a retail store you can see and confirm quality and colors of product, on internet it can only be seen In the store you can actually see and feel the product On internet you are going on pictures. In the store you can try it on, feel the fabric Can't try things on Can't ask questions</p> <p>Selection/Delivery On the Internet you more likely to find exactly what you need On the Internet there isn't a guarantee of satisfaction and no instant gratification More selection Pay for shipping</p> <p>Ease/Convenience Not crowded, no lines, no salespeople Go at your own pace and no closing times No lines and shop in your underwear Took place of catalog shopping for me Quicker</p> <p>Impulse More likely to think through a purchase in a store Easier and faster, no salespeople and clutter</p> <p>Returns Not easy to return items</p>
<p>2. Concern with online retail stores</p>	<p>Security Auction sellers are crooks Credit card information Problem using credit card, afraid company will keep charging my card and send me more stuff Credit card fraud Worried about abuse and misuse of credit cards</p> <p>Returns Returning items, clothes don't fit</p> <p>Delivery Delivery time Time it takes to actually get the product</p>
<p>3. Mood influences on browsing</p>	<p>Good mood, I'm not on computer when in bad mood Generally good mood– browsing is recreational Mood doesn't really affect browsing If I'm in a bad mood, I don't have the patience to browse I like the internet so mood is not a factor A bad mood makes me feel like I need to buy something Affects browsing retail sites– browse less in bad mood</p>

chases on the Internet. Furthermore, consumers suggest online retailing makes it easier to make impulse purchases. Yet, perceptions of quality and experience with the product are not as realistic online. Online retailers, according to our respondents, offer ease and convenience but security and returns are a concern. Our conceptualization brings together all the elements that go into making an impulse purchase and is differentiated from all earlier definitions of Impulse purchases.

It is important to note that this is an exploratory study. The limitations include: (1) the use of a convenience sample (2) this study was exploratory and descriptive and thus not generalizable; and, (3) this discussion and findings are somewhat speculative and we would require methodological variations and replication to make more evidence available in support of broadening the concept of impulse purchases. However, this study brought forth some significant findings that provide a robust platform for future research. With reference to online impulse purchasing behavior, results suggested that: (1) impulse purchases are reflected in change in intentions due to response to stimuli; (2) In addition to the product, there are other stimuli that may influence consumers, which will then affect impulse purchasing; (3) Atmospheric cues are likely to influence impulse purchases; (4) Mood and affect may influence consumers' desire to use the Internet and their subsequent desire to make online purchases impulsively; (5) Positive hedonic experiences are related to impulse purchases online.

The advent of Internet makes it easier than ever before for consumers to buy impulsively. Researchers should pay particular attention to the tremendous role that Internet can play in facilitating easier and interesting browsing opportunities, opening newer possibilities for immediate gratification based on mood states, and providing hedonic shopping environment.

Hence, future research needs to spend more time and renewed efforts on broadening the concept of impulse purchases to accommodate impulse purchases in the retail stores and as well as on the Internet. Also, research would benefit from paying individual attention to the concepts of exposure to stimuli (other than product), browsing the Internet for recreational or informational purposes, and mood states. Consequently experimental studies (For example, experimenting with different retail web-sites with different stimuli to measure stimuli to explore implications for web-page layouts), structured quantitative studies would greatly enhance our overall understanding of impulse buying phenomena in traditional retail stores as well as online.

In addition, research paying specific attention to stimuli such as (1) graphics, text, pop-up windows, audio, color, e-mail, streaming video, and organization and grouping of merchandise for online retail stores; and (2) price specials, coupons, product usage demonstrations, store layout, and store atmospherics for traditional retail stores could contribute immensely towards our understanding of impulse purchasing behavior. Also, influence of website effectiveness elements on impulse purchasing behavior could be studied. However, researchers should note the possibility that in case of some products (food, clothing) customers still rely on experiencing the product on a multisensory basis (taste, sound, smell, scent).

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Talking Together: Consumer Communities and Health Care

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ABSTRACT

Consumer involvement in computer mediated communities (CMCs) is increasing particularly in high involvement services such as healthcare. This paper examines the role of CMCs as providers of patient information and support and the subsequent effect on the relationship between 'informed' consumers and health care providers. The evolving dialogue between consumers in virtual communities provides one key axis along which professional service consumption will evolve. The challenge for service consumers is to develop frameworks that facilitate robust dialogue and exchange of information and emotional support to complement their rising authority. The parallel challenge is for the established medical profession to recognise the consequences of this evolving dialogue and develop approaches to service delivery that effectively engage with consumers on the basis of this increasing authority.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer communities are not a new concept, indeed as Muinz and O'Guinn (2001) point out, the concept of community is a core construct in social thought, possessing a long intellectual history. What is new is the potential for modern communications technology, specifically the internet, to facilitate communities that lie outside of traditional social or geographical boundaries, enabling consumers to communicate with like minded individuals with whom they would not normally have contact. Evidence suggests that this type of virtual community is increasingly common: Horrigan & Rainie, (2002) suggest that 84% of U.S. internet users have, for example, visited one or more online consumer groups and 79% of them could identify at least one virtual community with which they stay in regular contact. There is evidence that participation in online forums such as chat rooms, bulletin boards, listservs and newsgroups can significantly impact on consumer knowledge and behavior, such that virtual communities act as important reference groups for their participants (Jolink, 2000; Kozinets, 1997). Clearly, the value of the internet as an information resource is potentially immense, it is in the nature and veracity of information available that problems arise. Although this might not be of particular concern in most situations, the use of virtual communities as a source of information in respect of professional services such as health care, has important implications for consumers. Specifically, if the information which consumers gather from the internet is inaccurate or biased, significant health problems may ensue. While significant research is emerging which focuses on health care professionals' perception of internet based information (see for example Impicciatore 1997; Neuberger 2000; Eysenbach 2002; Kunst 2002; Purcell 2002) there is little research to date addressing consumers' use of internet communities in health care situations. In this paper we examine the dynamics and use of virtual consumer communities as sources of medical information. Based on interviews with consumers and site managers, the research specifically examines the role of virtual communities as providers of patient support, consumer's view of the information they receive in this way and the subsequent effect on the relation-

ship between consumers and health care systems at both service delivery and policy levels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of the internet in the consumption of professional services has potentially important implications for both the conceptualisation of consumer behaviour and the delivery of professional services. The internet offers consumers access to a level of specialist technical information that was formerly the preserve of service professionals. Equally, it facilitates close interaction between diverse groups of consumers across national boundaries through the emergence of service specific computer mediated communities (CMCs). Such CMCs may be viewed as analogous to the emergent online brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001) in which the customer rather than the company is the central source of communication (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). This empowerment of consumers through enhanced access to technical information has the potential to redress the informational asymmetries characteristic of professional services and challenge the established legitimacy and power of professionals within the service delivery process (Hogg et al, 2003). Professional services have traditionally been characterised by an in-built power imbalance where the consumer engages with the professional from a position of dependency, and the professional determines what is in the consumer's best interest on the basis of his or her professional judgement (Parsons, 1975). Mills and Moshavi (1999) describe such services as knowledge based services which "use intellectual capital—a body of ideas—to diagnose or determine client priorities and justify a recommended course of action" (p.49). Health care has been described as an arch-typical professional service (Wilson, 1994): core to the health care exchange is the fact that the consumer is inexpert, lacking both diagnostic skills and knowledge of treatment options, while the professional is presented as the specialist, possessing the relevant technical skills and knowledge. The analogy has been that of supplicant and priest:

"The consumer's only right is to have access to the health care system, to the secular church: once that has been achieved, it is for the professional providers to determine what treatment is appropriate" (Klein, 1995 p.307)

The consumer is viewed as passive, a patient by displaying patience, deferring to the expert judgement of the professional and limiting his or her involvement to consenting to the professional's preferred option (Ham and Alberti, 2002). Thus in the twentieth century modernist settlement, a clear boundary was apparent between healthcare professionals and the broader population of consumers.

This deferential patient-professional relationship is increasingly challenged by the ongoing socio-economic changes occurring across post-industrial societies. These have created the environmental conditions where a growing proportion of consumers are increasingly willing and able to utilise the emerging information resources to challenge this conventional professional supremacy. Driven by government policy initiatives, increased levels of education, particularly tertiary education, and high profile cases of professional negligence indicative of a 'failure' in health care services, the relationship between health service professionals and

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consumers is changing. Consumers are no longer inclined to accept the uncorroborated advice of the professional and are increasingly turning to other sources of information to educate themselves about their health. The internet is an important source of such information, offering consumers a range of information sources and facilities for discussion. No longer is technical and comparative health care information the preserve of the professional, rather it is now accessible to consumers (Hogg et al 2003). A key source of such information is the virtual communities of consumers focusing on specific conditions.

It is possible to discriminate between four types of consumer communities active on the internet. These communities encompass firstly, the type of brand communities discussed by, for example Muinz and O'Guinn (2001), which are focussed on particular brands or products; secondly, communities of interest which are based around hobbies such as gardening or cookery and members share information about these interests; thirdly, fantasy communities which are focused on particular computer games and share information such as 'cheats'; and finally communities of relationship which are based around personal problems and illness and provide support and information to members based on shared experience. It is this latter group that is the focus of this research. Under the classification developed by Kozinets (2000) this type of community is constructed around chat rooms and email lists. Following Muinz and O'Guinn (2001), we define the internet based communities examined in this study as specialised, non-geographically bounded groups, marked by a shared consciousness, rituals and traditions and a common sense of moral responsibility. In this context the rituals and traditions are based on an understanding of medical care and its social practices and rituals that "serve to contain the drift of meanings" (Douglas and Isherwood 1979, p65), i.e. to create a common understanding of the social and cultural experience of healthcare. To this extent we concur with Muinz and O'Guinn (2001)'s contention that contemporary communities are imagined, based on the sense of unmet fellow members, liberated from geography by relatively inexpensive and accessible communication (see also Anderson 1983; Wellman 1979). The essential difference between virtual and traditional communities is the voluntarily nature of membership, whereas in traditional communities membership may be imposed by chance of birth, proximity of residence, etc (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002). Membership of these groups is highly fluid and levels of interaction with the community vary and behavioural change as a result of membership is likely to be a result of the perceived value of the information obtained (Okleshen and Grossbart 1998). The internet provides the vehicle for motivated individuals to communicate, to exchange information and to provide what Gusfield (1978) referred to as 'consciousness of kind' provided by communities; thus by their very nature contributing participants in these virtual communities of relationship are high involvement consumers, having deliberately determined to engage with other consumers confronting similar situations (Mathwick, 2002).

One of the challenges faced by consumers in interacting within such a virtual community is the legitimacy, and indeed identity of the participants. Very little background information needs to be supplied by participants and there is no obvious way to verify the accuracy and quality of information available (Impicciatore et al, 1997; Wyatt, 1997). Recent developments linked to the problems of children being contacted by paedophiles over the internet has highlighted that on the internet you can be whoever you want, may make untrue claims and give inaccurate information with impunity. This anonymity strips individuals of their 'status trappings' such as race, age, gender, looks, timidity, handicaps and encourages frankness (Garrison 1994) allowing the development of what Tambyah

(1996) calls the 'net self', an alternative to IRL (in real life). Whilst this implies the democratic and relational nature of the internet, it also exposes the anarchic nature of the medium: freedom from control can also mean freedom from accuracy. Meyrowitz (1985 p.39) suggests that in any given situation we unconsciously ask "who can see me, who can hear me? and who can I see, who can I hear?" The answers to these questions allow the choice of appropriate behaviour and the role that will be acted out. The internet alters the possibilities by providing an alternative social situation where the roles are negotiated beyond the normal boundaries and social markers that determine interpersonal behaviour. Given that in most social situations 90% of communication takes place non verbally and that non verbal cues are the most powerful indication of detecting deceptive communication between individuals (Argyll 1994), the absence of these cues leaves consumers exposed and vulnerable. A fundamental requirement of such communities is therefore trust: members trust that the participants are acting in the best interests of the community and that they are providing the benefit of their experiences in an open and altruistic way. This has important consequences in health care situations where inaccurate or misleading advice regarding, for example, drug treatments may cause physical harm.

It is, however, important to recognise that with regard to the actual health care information available via the internet at one level this may in fact not be substantially dissimilar to the word of mouth information and misinformation passed between individuals, albeit within a broader network encompassing greater shared experience and potentially expertise. There are frequently divergent views on the validity of treatments, even amongst professionals (Flanigan and Metzger, 2000) and patient support groups have been a feature of healthcare for many years. However, it is in the range and reach of these groups in terms of participation that the internet has had an effect. These groups have lower barriers to participation than traditional patient support groups in terms of factors such as time and commitment. Importantly, because the participants can remain anonymous and therefore protect their privacy, they are more inclined to be open and to express views or feelings that they would be reluctant to share in a face to face encounter. A central theme in this regard is the scope for participants to adopt alternative identities as part of the process of 'anonymisation' facilitated by the internet. Reflecting such characteristics on line communities offer consumers the opportunity to compare healthcare systems across national boundaries, diagnosis and treatment as well as offer mutual support and 'counselling'. In addition, because of the evolving expertise of the 'members' of such communities, they have the potential to provide a mechanism for consumer education, thereby addressing the cognitive shortcomings of consumers in utilising specialist technical information. Equally the social inter-connectedness, or *communitas* that develops within net communities has been shown to lead to the development of bonds that are as powerful as traditional communities (Tambyah 1996). It is against this complex expertise and relational context that the dynamics of virtual communities require to be considered in respect of their impact on patterns of professional service consumption.

RESEARCH FOCUS

This paper is based on exploratory research undertaken in the United Kingdom and the United States into a small number of consumers' and professionals' perceptions of health based consumer communities and the impact of participation in this type of forum on their health care experiences. In understanding and researching such communities two types of community membership have been identified, namely 'posters' and 'lurkers'. Posters actively contribute to the discussions and provide continuity to the

group while lurkers observe without participating (Rheingold 1993). Each may feel a sense of belonging to the community but until lurkers make a contribution to the discussion their presence is unknown to the rest of the group. As a result, in this research we only address the community of posters, i.e. individuals who are willing to participate in the discussion. The data collection involved in-depth interviews with 20 consumers who participated in such interactions (10 in the UK and 10 in the US) selected by posting a message on a range of health based web sites chosen at random from a search engine. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or online. It is important to recognise that the consumers represented in the interview sample are 'high involvement' consumers, that is consumers who have experience with both the internet as an information source and participation in relationship communities. As such they are not necessarily typical of current patterns of consumption. However, they give an indication of how 'early adopters' are using the internet and may provide indicative evidence of evolving patterns of consumption behaviour. The interviews were supported by observation of health related discussion forums. Such participation enabled both the content and dynamic of these forums as sources of consumer information to be analysed. Whilst there are clear limitations of this research in both the size of the study and the generalisability of the findings, it provides a valuable insight in an emerging issue and as such we believe is of value to both professionals and patients.

RESULTS

Three core themes emerge from the interviews with consumers participating in internet based virtual communities. The first theme concerns the dynamics of such virtual communities, and particularly the nature of interaction within such communities. Associated with this is the issue of the quality and credibility of information and advice available through such communities as well as the implications for consumers. The second core theme relates specifically to the nature of the information available to consumers through such communities. Two key sub-themes emerge in respect of the nature of information, namely the comparative nature of the information available due to such communities bridging multiple health care systems, and the generation of participant awareness of the service options available in respect of a particular condition. Implicit within both these sub-themes is the challenging of existing service provision, both at the health care system, that is policy, level and at the operational, that is consultation or service encounter level. The third core theme relates to the support function of these virtual communities both in terms of providing immediate personal support to individual consumers and in terms of campaigning for changes in service provision at the collective level.

Dynamics of Virtual Communities

The most common mechanism through which virtual community interaction occurs through the internet takes the form of so called 'chat rooms' (Pew Research Centre, 2001). Structurally within such a forum a host generally monitors the postings, i.e. the contributions made by participants and helps to stimulate the conversations. By effectively controlling what is posted and who is allowed into the chat rooms, hosts regulate and 'manage' the community. While the range and power of the host varies, they play a critical role in shaping the nature of the information exchange undertaken, in the same way as a traditional editor. This raises questions over the perceived democratic nature of the internet and the associated implication for patterns of behaviour. What is striking about the information exchanged through such forums is the level of sophistication. For example a consumer in a chat room calling herself "young women with heart disease" had a question

about the risk of heart disease due to menopause. The response given by the host was:

Here is what I have learned! At menopause a woman's risk of cardiovascular disease increases. This includes diseases of the heart and blood vessels such as heart attack, angina, stroke, and hardening of the arteries. The pro's of hormone replacement therapy? Estrogen replacement reduces the rate of bone loss after menopause, which would affect osteoporosis. Research indicates the estrogen replacement in post-menopausal women reduces the incidence of heart disease. It may be due to the change in cholesterol and triglycerides produced by estrogen...

Although the host did not present herself as medically qualified the information provided is detailed, and explained medical treatment options in considerable depth and from a position of someone who is in the same situation. This sharing of personal experiences is a particularly powerful source of information, creating an emotional tie which generates strong source credibility and empathy. This tie may even take precedence over the traditional consumer-professional relationships, which tend to be less personal and frequently criticised for their non-empathic nature (John 1996).

Not all reported experiences of such chat rooms were positive. For example, this US consumer felt sufficiently knowledgeable to challenge the information and advice provided by the host. This highlights the ongoing importance of 'intellectual capital' in determining the relative power of participants in professional service 'encounters':

I have mainly used two Websites and one is very good, the host is objective, but the other one is very bad. The host bullies people that do not agree with his opinions and he tries to sell them treatments that he agrees with. He is selling 16 grams of hydrocortisone, which is very dangerous. I told him, so he struck me off the page. (Female- US)

Such experiences not only highlight the power dynamics inherent in virtual communities but also that in effectively utilising internet based information there is, for some consumers, evidence of a steep 'learning curve'. Managing to get information from the internet that the consumer views as adequate can prove a challenge. Novice chat room users are inherently vulnerable to the influence of both hosts and apparently knowledgeable community members. For example a female community participant from the UK indicated;

When I first started using the internet I would like go off on all these tangents, and waste all this time, lots of junk which just confused me, some really technical stuff to which was more for scientist instead of patients. It took me a long time to learn how to use the internet chat rooms to answer my questions.

A number of key issues regarding the role of the internet as a source of health care information are evident from such representative experiences. First, the objectivity of the information provider must be questioned given the prevalence of site ownership by providers of health care products and services. This is particularly insidious in the context of a chat room, which is perceived by consumers to be an open and neutral information forum and rarely is site ownership or the affiliation of members declared. Second, the power of the host to control the conversations and to monitor participation thereby shaping the information provision has the potential for abuse, as evidenced in the experience quoted above. This is an issue of particular significance given the characteristic vulnerability of

health care consumers arising from the circumstances under which the consumption of such ‘distress’ services occurs (Strasser et al, 1995).

Informational Function: Comparative Information

A central theme arising from this research is the comparative nature of the information accessible to consumers. This can range from advice on second opinions within a particular healthcare system to comparing treatments between countries. For example, certain treatments are not permitted under the UK NHS, where the scarcity of public resources have resulted in, and in turn been further highlighted by, decisions not to allow the prescribing of certain drugs. This leads some patients to believe that they would be better treated in other countries, for example:

The government won't let you have that 'flu drug, they say it hasn't been proved to work yet, but I was on the web and they can get it in Australia—if its safe there, why not here? Its just political because they think too many people will want it, but why not? (Female UK)

These communities offer patients a network of information gathered around the world. For example a UK consumer stated:

I receive about 20 e-mails a day, using the list box system. This is how I found the current medication that I am taking, which is working. First I contacted a person in the US who put me in touch with someone in Canada, who knew a doctor in Australia, who had a colleague in London who provided me with information and treatment (Male, UK).

An important aspect of this patient-to-patient communication is the comparison of healthcare systems. One particular list box group consists of about 200 people from twenty countries and highlight deficiencies in each country's medical system. For example an UK patient using the ‘list box’ e-mail system stated:

The list box system makes you aware of healthcare in other countries. Everybody in the US has lists of tests for the same condition that I have. They included neurological, tilt table and live blood test (TV screen). The UK government is not big in testing, they look down a government chart for a pill that fits the condition. It is silly because testing helps prevent illness. (Male, UK)

This level of dissatisfaction with their own health care system was apparent on both sides of the Atlantic with US patients perceiving that the European system was better based on evidence from chat rooms:

Well I think one of problems here [USA] is that we pay too much for healthcare. In Europe they all get it free or at really low costs. I also think the pharmaceutical companies are making out like bandits, because they get a higher price in the USA for their drugs (Female, USA)

These communities emphasise and reinforce the differences in health care systems between countries and break down the traditional geographical restriction on comparison. Whilst a limited number of international travellers had previously had the experience to make these comparisons they are now regularly discussed in chat rooms with potentially significant political consequences. As these quotes indicate, this erosion of boundaries between health care systems raises fundamental questions regarding consumer choice within

publicly funded health care systems and costs in privately funded systems. In the face of increasing consumer ‘knowledge’ the system of healthcare is politicised and its sustainability is brought into question.

Informational Function: Service Options

Information exchanged is not confined to health care systems or drug and other product related information. Equally several consumers indicated that they had received suggestions about tests to establish the nature of their illness, usually undiagnosed by current health care providers, for example:

For ten years I had a condition that would destroy my throat and tongue. I kept going to the hospital but they could never find the problem. I was in a chat room and someone suggested it could be an allergy so finally I told them [hospital staff] that I would not move from the chair unless they gave me an allergy test. It turned out to be an allergy to the mercury in my fillings. As soon as my fillings were changed the condition went away. It was a simple test. Why didn't they try it first! Why did they make me suffer for ten years! (Male UK)

A central theme in this regard is the perception that professionals do not offer patients the full range of service options they expect as informed consumers. Many patients who are utilising chat rooms are often looking for alternatives to the therapies recommended by their conventional health care professional, particularly in respect of drug treatments. There was a commonly held view that the medical profession turn to drugs without considering alternative therapies and that by speaking to other patients, advice on alternative therapies could be shared, for example:

I took control over my own destiny by setting down a recovery protocol based on homeopathic medicine. I got information about alternatives to prescription medication from the chat room and brought it into my physician, he did not seem interested and I had the feeling that I was wasting his time. (Female, USA)

This indicates another common theme, namely the reluctance of health care professionals to accept the information which patients gather from such sites and their scepticism of the validity of the information. In this respect a UK respondent commented;

I did not agree with the traditional science based attitude towards illness. They seem to try to fit illnesses into a codebook and just look up the prescription. That's why I started to look at the internet and found other people who agreed with me. (Male UK)

This is reinforced by anecdotal accounts in the letters pages of journals such as the *British Medical Journal* and *New England Journal of Medicine* from health care professionals describing consumers arriving for a consultation armed with reams of internet printouts (see Coiera, 1996; Eysenbach and Diepgen, 1998). More fundamentally such attitudes and behaviours can be seen as part of a broader questioning not just of professional power and authority but also of established scientific paradigms and the nature of knowledge in post-modern societies (Laing and Hogg 2003).

Support Function: Individual and Collective

It is clear that members find support and comfort from communicating with other people with similar conditions over the internet,

regardless of the information exchange. For example, a female participant from the USA stated that she used the internet as:

A source of hope and something to keep me busy, it also lets me interact with other patients' which makes me feel that I am not alone.

In a similar vein a male participant from the UK described the support he gained from these chat rooms

When I was first diagnosed I knew no one else with my particular illness. I was scared and finding people on the internet to talk to helped me cope, just to know it is possible to live a normal life (male UK).

These support groups have common emotional ties through illness and strong personal bonds are formed. Many of these patients have been through the same emotional process of dealing with illness which allows them to offer support on a more personal level than professionals. The patients discuss medication and compare treatment but also support each other using terms like "hugs", "positive things come out of negative", "hang in there".

Traditionally a patient's medical history has been regarded as confidential due the personal nature of illness. This research found evidence of a cultural change associated with a more open environment of healthcare information through the net. Patients were willing to post entire medical histories, either describing positive success stories or negative stories of medical mistakes or drug side effects. This arguably reflects the anonymity afforded to consumers by the internet and the reduction of the parochialism associated with geographically defined communities.

An example of a success story would be "Alexandra's heart page", which is dedicated to a parent's (Trent & Diane) successful struggle with their newborn baby's congenital heart defect (<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Prairie/1187/>). This Web site included the complete patient history from diagnosis to the surgical operation that provided the cure, the child's heart diagram, complete with initial diagnoses and a diagram of heart after the operation. When interviewed these parents commented:

Sharing our child's treatment helped to ease the pain and also helped us to connect with other parents who had similar experiences. It was just such a traumatic experience and using the net helped to cope.

The emotional trauma associated with the treatment of their illness helped to elevate some of the negative aspects of being a primary caregiver for their child. Clearly, contributing to the web site was in itself a help to the family, in addition to support from the net public who visited the site, sent letters of support and also shared their experiences with the family. These Web-sites are frequently linked through 'webring' technology which links Web based communities that are organised by related interest into "easy-to-travel" networks. For example, the 'webring' for one particular illness, namely childhood heart disease, had at the time of the research, 128 linked web-sites which received 10,682 hits in an eight-week period ([http://stat/webring.com](http://stat.webring.com)) providing a robust indication of the reach and popularity of such interconnected communities of interest.

Similarly, in addressing negative consumer experience patients who have had damaging side effects from prescription medicine are able to meet and organise against the manufacturers of pharmaceutical drugs and the established healthcare system. One example is a patient group called the National Lupron Victims

Network (NLVN) (<http://www.voicenet.com/~nlvn>). This is an independent grass roots organization comprised of men and women who had taken the prescription drug Lupron and were experiencing medical problems after stopping the medication. The information provided by the NLVN is supplied in a factual, scientific manner indicating a high level of education of the authors and the NLVN homepage includes detailed articles attacking the clinical and medical data associated with the marketing of this drug.

Patient groups who challenge the effects of medication are not new to the healthcare environment, what is new is the speed and ease of organization with which they can develop as a result of computer based communication technologies. Such developments have important implications for pharmaceutical companies in terms of managing both the product development process and organisational reputations. It also has implications for drug regulatory bodies. If they are perceived to make a mistake and approve a drug with weak clinical data, patients through their ability to assimilate and analyse data have the ability to rapidly create an anti-drug movement. Obvious examples of such behaviour can be identified in the public rejection of the MMR vaccine and campaigns in the UK against mercury based DWTP vaccines for children. Once again a key theme in this regard is the ability of such communities to mobilise data across national health care system boundaries. Inevitably this power may also be used as a 'political' tool to influence the drug regulatory approval process.

Of particular interest in understanding the dynamic and role of such virtual communities, is the emerging evidence that these communities are starting to develop as entities outside the net environment through the formation of geographically based chapters. For example on the "little-hearts" home page (<http://nav.webring.com/cgi-in/navcgi?ring=littlehearts;list>) there is a picture of the Connecticut group meeting for a picnic, followed by the California group expressing an interest in forming a similar social meeting. This is significant because it suggests that whilst the internet provides the impetus for these people to connect with each other it does not necessarily replace social interaction on an interpersonal level. Such developments in turn have significant implications for the role of established support and information communities centred on particular medical conditions as well as the relationship between such traditional communities and the emerging virtual communities of interest.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of virtual communities of interest in health care has profound implications for future patterns of health care consumption and delivery. By creating forums where consumers can address complex health care problems relatively free from the script and role constraints imposed by health care professionals, the resultant inter-consumer dialogue empowers health care consumers to challenge conventional patterns of behaviour and interaction. Specifically by offering consumers access to technical and comparative information, as well as by facilitating consumer understanding of such information, the dialogue in such communities creates the scope for consumers to re-balance the health care encounter from one of elitist professional domination to a more egalitarian format. In its most acute condition, the conventional boundary between the informed consumer and the established medical profession dissolves. At the same time consumers seem emboldened by 'communities of relationship' to advocate alternative healthcare discourses to the established medical discourse, for example homeopathic and holistic healthcare (Thompson 2003). Alternatives vie with the conventional medical 'knowledge' for the legitimacy to interpret the flux of events. To the extent that these challenges are successful, consumers relativise the merits of alter-

native healthcare discourse to establish a plurality of 'products' and service options.

Alongside this informational role such virtual communities also serve a relational function in terms of the provision of emotional support. Drawing together consumers with shared experiences of a condition, yet varied experiences of treatments and outcomes, virtual communities offer an empathic environment that provides consumers with the emotional support frequently perceived to be lacking in traditional consumer-professional relationships. By facilitating consumers' cross boundary comparisons it also significantly adds to the politicisation of healthcare provision.

The potential anonymity offered by such virtual communities allows a degree of intimacy in sharing experiences and emotions that is unlikely to occur in IRL communities where participants may be identifiable and familiar through membership of other overlapping communities. Additional to the relational dimensions occurring at the level of the individual service encounter, such virtual communities also provide a collective support function through enabling the emergence of campaigning communities operating across geographical and political borders capable of mobilising the expertise to challenge the professional and political health care establishments. It is as a consequence of such factors that virtual communities can be viewed as enabling a fundamental change in the format of professional service consumption. One aspect of such communities that has yet to be examined is the motivation for participation and the extent to which consumers are motivated by learning goals, i.e., the gathering of information, or performance goals or the desire to parade knowledge without the desire to improve it. Further research in this area is required to address the motivation for participation and to compare this with traditional geographic communities.

Yet it would be erroneous to suggest that these virtual communities of interest are uniformly advantageous for consumers and do not pose significant challenges for participants. At the core of such problems are themes of identity, credibility, power, control and democracy. As with real life communities, central to the workings of virtual communities are the characteristics of the participants, their background and experience together with the environment within which such communal dialogue occurs. However, within virtual communities these issues are exacerbated by scope for participants, as a result of the inherent anonymity associated with the internet, to adopt net identities unconstrained by their 'real' identity measured in terms of status, education and expertise. Even for highly socialised consumers such virtual environments may disable their ability to form adequate judgements regarding the credibility of community participants, the role and affiliation of participants, and the veracity of the information being exchanged. Consequent to this is the heightened dependence on trust in the ethical behaviour and community ethos motivating participants to share information and provide advice. Given that health care is a high involvement service and highly personal in its impact, it is striking that consumers evident trust in dialogue with other consumers as a source of health care information is matched by declining levels of consumer trust in health care professionals. Arising in part from high profile cases of professional negligence, this reappraisal of the relative trustworthiness and credibility of different sources of information also requires to be seen as part of a broader challenging of professional status and questioning of scientific information and knowledge associated with post-modernist consumption. Indeed in the most extreme view the exposure of 'failure' is seen as a ploy to bolster the simulacra of a 'real' medical profession (Baudrillard 1988). Simultaneously the post-modern healthcare consumer is created through the new plurality of

products while the certainty that might have reduced the perceived risks is undermined.

Within this context of a risk society (Beck 1999) the evolving dialogue between consumers in virtual communities provides one key axis along which professional service consumption will evolve. The challenge for service consumers is to develop attitudinal, behavioural and social frameworks that facilitate robust dialogue and exchange of information and emotional support to complement their rising authority. The parallel challenge is for the established medical profession to recognise the consequences of this evolving dialogue and develop approaches to service delivery which effectively engage with consumers on the basis of this increasing authority.

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Getting Specific about the Consequences of Stress & Emotion for Health Protection Intentions: Differential Sources of Stress and Emotional Reactions

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In many health contexts, decision making is increasingly becoming the patient's responsibility. Many of these decisions have potentially stressful consequences that can generate negative emotion and stress. Health psychology research has explored the general notion of such negative affect as a barrier to health promotion (e.g., Rippletoe & Rogers 1987). However, relatively little attention has been devoted to how specific sources and aspects of affect (beyond positive versus negative valence or generalized notions of stress) might influence adherence behavior.

This session explores the impact of distinct sources of negative affect on health protection intentions and in the process delineates how specific emotions influence health promotion. All three papers focus on health behaviors and take a nuanced view of how emotion and stress influences behaviors.

The papers find that various types of affect cause systematic and predictable deviations from normative behavior. Thus, incorporating an understanding of the effects of emotions and stressors in these decision making domains, rather than merely focusing on cognitive or rational intentions, can help consumer researchers make better predictions about likely behavior. Taking a nuanced (e.g., task versus ambient, specific emotion) view of these effects further deepens our understanding of these important decision domains.

The first paper, (Anand Keller and Olson) examines the role of fear and stress in adolescents' health decisions. They find that severity and vulnerability perceptions increase fear and fear in turn increases self-efficacy and protection intentions, in contrast ambient stress increases vulnerability and reduces self-efficacy and protection intentions. They propose that these non-cognitive dimensions of fear and stress as well as the impact of other emotions need to be considered in the Protection Motivation Theory Model.

The second paper, (Agrawal and Menon), examines how specific emotions, such as anxiety elicited by the message, could shape perceptions of risk and intentions to get tested. In a first study, they find that contextual cues embedded in the message systematically elicits specific emotions that in turn increase or decrease the effectiveness of the message and subjects intentions to get screened for hepatitis C. In a second study, they replicate their findings using incidental emotions. They conclude that emotions that are both incidental (ambient) and message evoked (task-related) are critical components to a comprehensive theoretical framework of health communications.

The third paper, (Luce, Kahn, and Grasshoff) explores the role of stress in decisions to get medical screening tests. Specifically, they find that if task related stress is primed by having individuals with a prior false positive test result briefly report that incident, adherence for future test intentions is decreased. Future test adherence does not decline in the absence of false positive results or if these previous results are not primed. Further, if patients are experiencing ambient stress from independent sources these declines in future adherence in the primed, false positive condition are heightened. This suggests that the effects of differential sources of stress (i.e., task versus ambient) can interact, with important implications for health behavior.

Hidden Effects of Persuasion

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In persuasion research, an ad is assumed to be effective to the extent that it changes the valence or extremity of a person's attitude, as reported on a rating scale. The present research argues that when people appear to have resisted persuasion (or an ad appears to have failed) according to traditional measures, there might actually be some important yet previously hidden effects on the target attitude. We apply two different paradigms in an attempt to understand whether resisted persuasive messages might under some conditions have hidden success.

First, based on recent advances in research on automatic evaluations, we test whether attitude change that is not apparent on direct self-report measures might be captured by indirect automatic measures, such as the Implicit Association Test (IAT, Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). Recent research suggests that automatic evaluations are sometimes sensitive to experimental treatments even when explicit measures have not shown the same influence (e.g., Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001; Maison, Greenwald, & Bruin, 2001; Olson & Fazio, 2001). In Experiment 1 of the present research, we examine the possibility that automatic evaluations can be affected by advertising even when self-report measures fail to evince any persuasive impact.

A second intriguing possibility is that when an ad fails to change the valence or extremity of a target attitude, it might have an impact on the underlying certainty with which that attitude is held. Tormala and Petty (2002) recently demonstrated that when people perceive that they have resisted persuasion, and feel that they have done a good job in this capacity (e.g., they resisted a strong attack), the certainty with which they hold the target attitude can *increase*. However, there may be some situations in which people resist persuasion yet perceive that they have not done such a great job (e.g., they resisted, but could only generate specious counterarguments). Experiment 2 tests the possibility that under such conditions, "failed" persuasive communications might actually reduce attitude certainty, which would make the target attitude less predictive of behavior and potentially more vulnerable to later change (see Gross, Holtz, & Miller, 1995).

Experiment 1

Seventy-nine undergraduates were placed in a high elaboration context and asked to read a neutral (control) message or a strong persuasive advertisement in favor of vegetable consumption. Following the message, participants reported their attitudes toward vegetables on a series of scales. Implicit attitudes were also assessed using the IAT (Greenwald, et al., 1998). Explicit and implicit attitude data were standardized and then submitted to a 2 x 2 mixed ANOVA, with type of measure (explicit or implicit) and type of message (ad or control) as the within- and between-participant factors, respectively. As expected, there was a significant interaction between these variables. Although explicit attitudes were unaffected by message condition, participants did show more favorable *implicit* attitudes toward vegetables when they had read the ad rather than control message. Thus, the traditional self-report measure did not reveal any persuasive impact of the advertising, but the implicit assessment clearly suggested that it had a hidden impact. Although we did not explore the moderating conditions of

this effect, we suspect that it is particularly likely when elaboration is high and the ad contains relatively strong arguments.

Experiment 2

Thirty-five participants were exposed to a counterattitudinal persuasive message. Before reading the message, participants reported their initial attitudes and attitude certainty. Following the message, participants were instructed to generate as many counterarguments as possible, after which they reported their post-message attitudes. Participants then received false feedback that their counterarguments were either strong or weak, after which they again reported attitude certainty. We conducted 2 x 2 mixed ANOVAs with time of measurement (pre or post) and counterargument feedback (strong or weak) as the within- and between-participants variables, respectively. Analysis of the attitude data suggested that attitudes were not affected by the message.

The certainty data revealed a different picture. There was no main effect for counterargument feedback, but there was an effect for time of measurement. Participants became significantly less certain of their attitudes following the message. This effect was qualified, however, by a significant interaction. Specifically, the decrease in certainty was confined to the weak counterargument feedback condition. When participants were led to believe their counterarguments were strong, certainty did not decrease. Also relevant, attitudes became less predictive of behavioral intentions when they were held with lower rather than higher certainty. In short, although conventional measures suggested the message did not affect attitudes, it actually weakened those attitudes under some conditions, thus revealing a hidden effect of the message.

Discussion

In 2 experiments, we found that when the impact of a persuasive communication appears to be nil, there might actually be some important yet previously hidden persuasive effects. Experiment 1 demonstrated that although an ad did not affect explicit self-report measures of attitudes, it did produce attitude change as assessed with an implicit measure. Experiment 2 revealed that although a persuasive communication failed to impact the valence or extremity of an attitude, it significantly reduced the certainty with which that attitude was held under specifiable conditions. On the surface, these effects seem very different. Indeed, one is based on automatic associations and stored cognitive representations, whereas the other is based on a higher order metacognitive kind of reasoning. However, these effects could ultimately prove related. What is clear is that when persuasion appears to have failed by conventional standards, there can be important effects worth exploring. Specifically, it appears that under some conditions at least, seemingly resisted persuasive messages can have a greater degree of success than was previously known.

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“Et Tu, Brutus?”: A Case for Consumer Skepticism and Backlash against Product Placements

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Marketers find themselves faced with the challenging task of creatively capturing and maintaining consumer attention. Two trends contribute to the search for unconventional methods for message delivery: (1) the gradual adaptation of consumers to existing modes of marketing communications; and (2) the increasing abundance of marketing messages that compete for limited consumer attention. Placing brands within media content (e.g., movies, T.V. programs, music) is one such method. This practice is termed as ‘product placement’—while brand sponsors pay for embedded commercial messages, this sponsorship frequently remains hidden (Balasubramanian 1994; Solomon and Englis 1996).

Placements are considered as cost-effective alternatives to advertising based on widely held assumptions (i.e., consumers are naïve and unwittingly consume marketing messages in the guise of entertainment due to the naturalistic and covert manner of brand inclusion) that may not necessarily bear out given the sophistication of audiences today. This assumed lack of persuasion knowledge is questioned based on contradicting anecdotal and pretest evidence: consumer speculations about the commercial intent of embedded messages and consequent skepticism are found to be high. Scant academic attention has been paid to the impact of variations in consumer awareness, except in the case of ethically controversial products (e.g., alcohol, tobacco) where public policy legislation is called for. The role of persuasion knowledge in generating a consumer backlash against placements (e.g., lowered trust in media and placed claims) remains unexplored. Important insights into the need for regulating placement activities may be gained from this research. If consumers are indeed more sophisticated than they are given credit for and possess adequate awareness and consequent mechanisms to cope with persuasive attempts, the call for government intervention may be unwarranted.

Further, investigations into placement efficacy have been limited to brand memory and evaluation (Babin and Carder 1996), and evidence available is ambiguous at best. Drawing upon tenets of the persuasion knowledge model (Friestad and Wright 1994) adds complexity to the placement efficacy construct (by also including trust in brand sponsors, the claims they make and trust placed in participating media). This suggests that the effectiveness of placements can be gauged from the point of view of all participants involved: for consumers (from a welfare perspective), for brand sponsors (from a brand and claim memory, attitudinal and trust perspective), and for participating media (from a trust and reputational perspective). Several issues thus warrant investigation: (a) Whether product placements are indeed as attractive as have been portrayed in past literature?; (b) Whether there are extenuating circumstances that might make advertisements more attractive?; (c) Whether product placement effects can prove to be a double edged sword for brand sponsors (by increasing memory on one hand, and hurting trust on the other) and for media (by generating additional revenue, yet potentially hurting its credibility); and (d) Whether government legislation of placement practices is needed in order to protect consumers that lack the ability to do so themselves?

The investigation focuses on consumer awareness of the covert commercial aspect of product placements and the consequent impact on placement efficacy. The 2 key hypotheses tested

are: (1) memory for placed brands and claims is higher than the memory for advertised brands (in line with past research); and (2) awareness of commercial intent moderates the effect of the trust in brands, claims made and media used, such that high awareness leads to lowered trust for claims and lowered perceptions of motive purity for media used, when brands are placed versus when they are advertised. In other words, placed claims are expected to enhance memory. At the same time, a potential backlash can occur if consumers become aware of the hidden commercial intent of sponsors. This backlash would not occur when awareness is low and no commercial intent is perceived. Consumers are already aware of the commercial nature of advertisements, and the question of feeling manipulated and consequent backlash does not arise here. Results support the proposition that though people appear to remember placed claims better, it may sometimes be better to advertise brands. Media managers in addition need to understand that repercussions to covertly embedding brands within the programming or editorial content are possible.

Three laboratory experiments (two conducted, one planned) test these hypotheses. Study 1 uses a paper-based scenario about brand placements for a fictional vitamin brand within a hypothetical magazine article. Awareness of commercial intent is manipulated, and the trust in brands, perceived motive purity of the medium involved, and feelings of betrayal in the medium are measured. Study 2 uses more realistic stimuli (presented as excerpts from a hypothetical magazine), measures awareness of commercial intent, and compares persuasion outcomes when claims about an unfamiliar brand of instant soup are placed versus advertised. Memory as well as trust measures for the brand and the medium are measured. Results bear out the proposition that placements can lead to better memory outcomes, yet they also have the potential to create a backlash if consumers feel they are being manipulated via covert marketing attempts. This dual nature of placements is under-investigated in existing placement literature and the implications for media tend to be ignored. In Study 3 we propose to investigate whether this backlash gets exacerbated when placements are discerned in highly credible media. Since consumers tend to hold credible media up to a higher standard of conduct, they may feel even more betrayed since such conduct would not be within the realm of their expectations.

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When Good Deeds Dilute Your Equity

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Based on the assumption that firms are rewarded for their social initiatives, many firms have become socially responsible (Levy 1999). However, consumers may not blindly accept these social initiatives as completely selfless. Therefore, it is proposed that consumer's evaluation of a social initiative is dependent upon the relationship between the firm and the cause, rather than the corporate act alone. Thus, the benefit accrued to the firm depends on whether the consumer (1) believes the social initiative makes sense or fits the firm; (2) believes the act is motivated by pro-social ideals; and (3) perceives the act as proactive rather than reactive. Through two studies, this research investigates the role that fit, perceived corporate motive, and timing play in determining consumer response to corporate social initiatives.

STUDY 1: EFFECTS OF FIT AND MOTIVATION

The Role of Fit

Fit is important because it affects: (1) how much thought people give to a relationship, (2) what types of thoughts are generated, and (3) the clarity of the company's position and ultimately their response to the company. Generally, we expect high fit programs to enhance company attitude and low fit programs to dilute company attitude (Aaker 1990; Keller and Aaker 1992; Mandler 1982; Simonin and Ruth 1998; Speed and Thompson 2000; Till and Busler 2000). If a company's social initiative fits or "matches" with prior expectations, knowledge, and associations about the firm (e.g., Home Depot and Habitat for Humanity), then the act and all of its positive associations should flow to the company (Till and Busler 2000). More specifically, if there is a fit between the company and the initiative based on a competency domain (e.g., building materials and homes for poor people), we expect the new information to be easily integrated into the consumer's cognitive structure of company associations strengthening the connection between the two (Fiske and Taylor 1991). The following hypotheses related to fit are examined:

H1: low fit between the company and the social initiative, versus high fit, results in:

- a. a greater number of thoughts
- b. thoughts that are less favorable and are more focused on motive
- c. less favorable overall attitude toward the company
- d. beliefs about the company being less credible
- e. lower likelihood of customer support

The Role of Perceived Corporate Motivation

Similar to fit, perceived corporate motivation is likely influence the number of thoughts, the content of thoughts, overall attitude toward the company, and specific belief measures related to corporate citizenship and corporate credibility. Specifically, when the initiative is motivated by profit rather than social welfare, consumers are likely to increase their elaboration which, in turn, is likely to increase the probability that persuasion knowledge (Friestad and Wright 1994, 1995) will be used and consumers will question the company's motivation (cf. Campbell and Kirmani 2000; Friestad and Wright 1994, 1995). Further in the low fit case,

this effect is likely to be more pronounced. The following hypotheses related to motivation are examined:

H2: profit motivated versus socially driven social initiatives, result in:

- a. a greater number of thoughts
- b. thoughts that are less favorable and more focused on corporate motive
- c. less favorable attitude toward the company
- d. beliefs about the company being less credible
- e. lower likelihood of customer support

We test the previous hypotheses in an experiment in which subjects were given news clippings to read about two well-liked companies (Home Depot and Revlon Cosmetics) and two social issues (Homelessness and Domestic violence).

Results

We find that social initiatives that are perceived as high fit and socially motivated have the strongest positive influence on consumer attitudes, corporate credibility and corporate positioning. Interestingly, when fit is low, motivation does not seem to matter in that consumer attitudes and beliefs about the company are consistently diluted. Additionally, we find that when fit is low, more thoughts are generated and that these thoughts tend to focus on efficacy of the program and corporate motivation.

These results suggest that firms need to fit their social initiatives with their corporate image and competencies in order to enhance consumer corporate perceptions. Such perceptions will be further enhanced if the corporate initiative is not perceived as profit motivated

STUDY 2: THE EFFECTS OF TIMING OF INFORMATION

In this experiment we identify an additional variable, timing, which we believe influence responses to social initiatives.

Timing

We predict that consumer perceptions of a socially responsible firm are influenced by whether the initiative is approached proactively or is a response to some environmental catalyst or corporate crisis (e.g., Benetton and capital punishment, versus McDonalds and their use of recyclable packaging material and Exxon and their environmental programs).

We know from the customer service and business ethics literature, that when service or ethics perceptions are exceeded by company actions, the company is rewarded in terms of more positive attitudes and behavioral intentions (Creyer and Ross 1997; Pyu 1998; Zeithmal 1998). If consumers expect a company to act or react in a given way, in this case socially responsible, that becomes the baseline reference point for which they gauge the company's actual behavior. In the case of reactive social initiatives (e.g., because of the Valdez oil spill Exxon becomes more openly involved in environmental issues), consumers may view the company as either just meeting or even falling short of the baseline reference point. However, in a high fit proactive program, consum-

ers may perceive the company as going beyond the reference point, and thus, are more likely to reward the company (Creyer and Ross 1997). The following hypotheses related to timing are examined:

H3: reactive versus proactive CSR initiatives, results in:

- a. thoughts that are less favorable and more focused on corporate motive
- b. attenuation of overall attitude
- c. beliefs about the company being less credible
- d. lower likelihood of customer support

Results

We find that attitude toward the company is enhanced when the program is perceived is proactive and diluted when the program is perceived is reactive. Further, we find that corporate credibility, corporate positioning, and purchase intention are all significantly enhanced when the initiative is proactive. Interestingly we also find that corporate ability is also enhanced when the initiative is proactive and high fit.

In summation, managers need to proactively and carefully choose their corporate social programs and make sure that communications are framed so that consumers perceive the initiative as socially motivated.

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When Counterarguing Fails: Effects on Attitude Strength

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Popular models of persuasion suggest individuals can process information in either an objective or a biased manner (see Petty & Wegener, 1999). Objective processing is data-driven (i.e., individuals generate whatever thoughts naturally come to mind). Biased processing, however, refers to focusing specifically on either rejecting or accepting a message (e.g., focusing on generating negative or positive thoughts). In the present research, we examine the consequences of biased processing involving a goal to counterargue a message versus a goal to simply think about the message carefully.

Prior research suggests a biased processing goal to counterargue a message is never good from the perspective of a persuader. For example, several lines of research have shown invoking a resistance goal in individuals leads to reductions in attitude change relative to objective processing goals (Petty & Cacioppo, 1977; Killeya & Johnson, 1998).

Recent research has suggested that a resistance goal can even increase certainty in one's initial attitude. Tormala and Petty (2002) found that when participants successfully counterargued a message perceived to be strong, their initial attitudes were held with more certainty compared to individuals whose attitudes also did not change because they did not receive any message. Tormala & Petty (2002) suggested people become more confident in their attitudes after successfully counterarguing a strong message because they can attribute success to the validity of their attitudes (e.g., "I counterargued strong arguments, so my attitude must be right!").

Thus, a survey of prior research leads to the conclusion that attempting to counterargue a message often leads to less persuasion, or even enhanced confidence in one's initial attitudes. This leads to a fairly simple conclusion that counterarguing is never advantageous. However, this conclusion is based on an incomplete empirical picture because past research has focused on situations in which counterarguing has been successful. Past research has neglected consequences associated with failed counterarguing.

The present research uses very strong arguments to ensure counterarguing fails to prevent the attitude from changing. We examine whether attitudes following a failed attempt to counterargue a message are different from attitudes that result from just thinking. Our hypothesis is that changing one's attitudes as a consequence of failed counterarguing will open the gates to inferences that do not accompany comparable attitude change associated with relatively objective message processing. For example, just as inferences people make regarding success might strengthen one's initial attitude (Tormala & Petty, 2002), inferences associated with a failure to counterargue may lead to a strengthening of a person's new (changed) attitude compared to a comparable change brought about without attempting to counterargue. Specifically, failure may increase individuals' certainty in their new attitude because they can conclude that they really have no negative thoughts about the advocated message. A person may think, "I tried to think of counterarguments against the message, but I really couldn't think of any. Now that I know I have no negative thoughts, I'm sure my new attitude is correct!" Individuals who processed the same message objectively, however, may not make this inference, having not aggressively considered the drawbacks to the message. They would simply be aware of their positive reactions to the strong arguments

without realizing that there are no drawbacks. Implications for behavior are also examined.

Procedure

In two experiments, participants were exposed to an advertisement for a novel aspirin. In both experiments, there were three conditions. Participants were randomly assigned to either (1) provide attitudes in the absence of a message (control), (2) to focus on their thoughts about the aspirin, or (3) to focus on their negative thoughts about the aspirin. Participants in treatment conditions received a message containing very strong arguments that had been pre-tested to elicit few negative thoughts. In experiment 1, participants' attitudes, attitude certainty, and behavioral intentions were assessed. In experiment 2, the mediator of the hypothesized strength effects was examined.

Results

Experiment 1: Compared to the control group, participants exposed to the message had more positive attitudes about the product. However, the attitudes of the message groups were identical regardless of whether they were instructed to focus on their thoughts or negative thoughts. Of primary interest, a significant main effect emerged such that individuals instructed to generate negative thoughts exhibited more certainty in their attitudes than individuals instructed to generate thoughts. Finally, even though participants instructed to generate negative thoughts showed the same amount of attitude change as those instructed to generate thoughts, the new attitudes of participants directed to generate negative thoughts were more predictive of intent to behave than were the new attitudes of participants who simply generated thoughts.

Experiment 2: Experiment 2 replicated the findings of Experiment 1. Specifically, participants showed identical attitude change relative to the control condition, regardless of whether they attempted to generate general thoughts or negative thoughts. However, participants who had attempted to generate negative thoughts reported being more certain of their attitudes. Furthermore, we found that participants' perceived negative reactions (i.e., the number of negative thoughts they believed they had) mediated the observed certainty differences in the following manner. Individuals instructed to generate negative thoughts inferred they possessed fewer negative thoughts about the product compared to individuals instructed to generate thoughts.

Discussion

This research makes a new contribution to understanding attitude change and strength. We demonstrate that attitudes following exposure to a compelling message, although equivalent in valence, can differ in strength depending on people's motives in processing the message. When people attempted to counterargue the message, their attitudes were held with more certainty compared to attitudes formed through relatively objective processing. An important consequence of this certainty is that the new attitudes are more predictive of behavior. Finally, our results suggest that this increased certainty is due to participants' metacognitions about the number of negative thoughts they think they have. Aggressively considering drawbacks to a product, but finding none, allows individuals to conclude they truly have few negative thoughts,

which increases attitude certainty. Individuals who objectively process a message have not aggressively considered the faults, and therefore are not as certain.

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The Interactive Effect of Timing and Attribute Alignability on Consumption

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In understanding how consumers evaluate or choose among product options, it is important to consider the situations where the decision and the experience are temporally separated. One of such situations takes place when the consumption of the product is delayed. Consumers often face situations where the purchase decision is immediate but the consumption of the product is in the future. For instance, one can purchase a book in order to start reading it in the very near future (e.g., in the coming week). Similarly, one can buy a book to read in an undetermined time in the future (e.g., when she is finishes reading the books she already bought before). Does the consumer decision making process differ depending on the consumption immediacy? Will the changes in time horizon for consumption systematically affect the way consumers represent and evaluate the options?

There has been ample amount of research on how consumers make choices and form preferences, most of which concerning immediate consumption scenarios. A well-accepted answer to this question suggests that consumers represent options by their attributes and then compare these attributes in order to determine their preference (Bettman, Johnson and Payne 1991). It has been found that when evaluating alternatives, consumers mostly rely on attributes that are shared by alternatives (alignable differences) and mostly ignore attributes that are identical (commonalities) or that do not have a correspondence in other alternatives (non-alignable differences) (Gentner and Markman 1994).

However, characteristics that are unique to representation of future events can lead these results to be inapplicable. Temporal construal theory (Liberman and Trope 1998, Trope and Liberman 2000) suggests that distant future events have more abstract, general and de-contextualized representations (high-level construal) that relate to desirability considerations, whereas near future events have more concrete, specific and contextual representations (low-level construal) that are feasibility oriented. Therefore, product options that are considered for future consumption will have more abstract representations. This abstraction in the representation would enable the use of holistic (alternative-based) strategies and creation of abstract level attributes in the evaluation process (Johnson 1984). Consequently, in constructing abstract features or creating a holistic evaluation for each option, consumers are as likely to use non-alignable differences as they use alignable differences.

We hypothesize that the relative importance of non-alignable differences will be higher for choices in the distant future relative to choices in the near future. We tested this hypothesis with an experiment, by manipulating time horizon (tomorrow vs. six months from now) between subjects with the following scenario.

“Imagine that you have been chosen to be the part of the group who is going to prepare the end of classes party this year, which going to take place *tomorrow night (six months from now)*. You have been given the responsibility of choosing and buying the microwave popcorns for the party.”

Following this, descriptions of two popcorn brands were presented (in a counterbalanced order), which had equal overall attractiveness ratings (Zhang and Markman 2001). Brand P is designed to be better in alignable attributes, while Brand Q is designed to be better in non-alignable attributes. Hence, a shift in preference between these brands in different time horizons will

reflect the different attention given to alignable and non-alignable differences. Participants were asked to indicate their preference (11-point scale anchored Prefer P and Prefer Q, with a neutral point of indifference), allocate 100 points between the brands and provide thought listings.

We expected to find a preference toward the alignable-better brand in near future, and a shift toward the non-alignable better brand in distant future, since consideration of the non-alignable attributes would make non-alignable better brand as much or more attractive than the alignable-better brand. Thus, finding participants to be either indifferent or have a preference toward the non-alignable better brand in distant future, would be an evidence for increased attention to non-alignable attributes.

As expected, alignable-better brand was preferred by 77% (68 out of 88) of the participants in near future, but only by 65% (58 out of 89) in distant future ($Z=-1.78, p<.05$). In contrast, 23% (20 out of 88) of the participants were either indifferent or preferred non-alignable better brand in near future, as opposed to 35% (31 out of 89) in distant future ($Z=1.78, p<.05$). Similarly, mean number of points allocated to the non alignable-better brand was greater in distant future ($M=43.38$) than in near future ($M=37.80$); ($F(1, 177)=4.816, p<0.05$).

Lastly in thought listings, which were coded by an independent rater who was blind to the hypotheses, we expected to find a greater mention of the alignable attributes in near future, but not in distant future. As expected participants mentioned alignable attributes ($M=1.40$) more than the non-alignable attributes ($M=0.77$) in near future ($F(1, 176)=3.799; p=.053$), but not in distant future ($M_A=1.08, M_{NA}=0.90; F(1, 176)<1, p>.1$), suggesting more emphasis on alignable difference in near future, but a more balanced consideration to both types of differences in distant future.

The results of the experiment provide support for the hypothesis that the representation and evaluation of alternatives are systematically different for situations with varying consumption immediacy. Specifically, we find that consumers put more emphasis on the non-alignable differences when the expected consumption is in distant future as compared to being immediate. This result is consistent with our prediction that people's representations of the options in future time framing does lead to a more abstract and holistic processing.

Current findings add to the understanding of how consumers evaluate and chose among alternatives when the consumption is in the future, by demonstrating a systematic shift in attention paid to different types of attributes for immediate versus future consumption scenarios.

The findings in this paper also extends the structural alignment theory (Medin, Goldstone, & Markman 1995), by addressing the issue of when and how the contextual factors promote the processing of the non-alignable attributes, which have been found to be effortful and difficult. Specifically, we have showed that the differences in time horizon can moderate the effect of alignability on preference formation.

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Improving Attribute-Importance Measurement; A Reference-Point Approach

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Abstract

Despite the importance of identifying the hierarchy of product attributes that drive judgment and choice, the many available methods remain limited regarding their convergent validity and test-retest reliability. To increase the validity and reliability of attribute-importance measurement, we focus on the central antecedent of the importance of product attributes in judgment and choice: consumers' valuation curve of an attribute—the idiosyncratic valuation of an attribute at different attribute levels relative to consumers' reference points. We propose two new attribute-importance measures that reflect the determinance and the relevance of an attribute respectively, and show that accounting for the effects of reference points increases the predictive validity of attribute-determinance measures.

Introduction

Identifying product attributes that are important in judgment and choice is a key objective of consumer research. A wide variety of methods to identify important attributes have been proposed and examined (Van der Pligt et al. 2000). However, the convergent validity among these methods is low, and sometimes replications even yield inconsistent results (Jaccard, Brinberg, and Ackerman 1986).

The objective of this research is to improve the efficiency, validity and reliability of attribute importance measurement. We propose that valid and reliable attribute-importance measures can be obtained by focusing on the central antecedent of attribute importance: the consumers' valuation curve of an attribute. This valuation curve reflects the idiosyncratic valuation of an attribute at different attribute levels, relative to consumers' reference points (Tversky and Kahneman 1991). Building on reference-dependent theory (Kahneman and Miller 1986, Tversky and Kahneman 1991), we show that the importance of product attributes in consumer judgment and choice depends on *reference points*. We introduce two new attribute importance measures that explicitly include the reference point concept and compare them against existing importance measures. The proposed approach helps explain the lack of validity among and reliability of existing methods, and yields valid and reliable attribute-importance measures that account for the effects of reference points and loss aversion. The approach allows for the determination of *two* dimensions of attribute importance: the *determinance* of an attribute in a judgment task (the importance of an attribute in judgment and choice), and the *relevance* of an attribute, independent of a product space (the importance of an attribute for a consumer) (Myers and Alpert 1968). Furthermore, the approach can be used for a variety of attributes and in different contexts, an important property, as both factors affect the importance of attributes in judgment and choice (Tversky, Sattath, and Slovic 1988).

Theoretical Background

The determinance of attributes reflects the importance of attributes in judgment and choice. It is generally calculated based on the difference in valuation of different attribute levels (e.g.,

conjoint method). Research on the determinance of attributes generally ignores the use of reference points. However, we hypothesize that the determinance of an attribute is larger when its attribute levels are perceived as losses, relative to reference point, than when these levels are perceived as gains (cf., Bell and Bucklin 1999).

To understand the effect of reference points and loss aversion on attribute importance, following Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), we assume that attribute-valuation curves drive judgment and choice additively. The attribute-valuation curve of an attribute reflects the valuation of attribute at different levels, related to products, relative to the related reference point. We assume that consumers' reference point of an attribute is determined by the level of the attribute of the product they currently use and that all alternatives in a specific product space are compared to this point (Briesch et al. 1997). The basic shape and properties of attribute-valuation curves are determined by three assumptions (Tversky and Kahneman 1991). First, it is assumed that the valuations of attribute levels are gains or losses relative to a reference point (*reference dependence*). Second, it is assumed that, as losses loom larger than corresponding gains, consumers weigh losses more heavily than gains (*loss aversion*). Third, it is assumed that the marginal valuation of both gains and losses decreases with their size (*diminishing sensitivity*). The assumptions produce an asymmetric S-shaped valuation curve, concave above the reference point and convex below it.

If consumers' reference points influence the determinance of attributes, we should account for this effect in calculating the determinance of attributes and develop more valid and reliable determinance measures. By testing the predictive validity of a new determinance measure that accounts for the effects of reference points and loss aversion, we can gain some initial insights into the validity of this proposition.

Attribute-valuation curves reflect both the *determinance* as well as the *relevance of the attribute*. By correcting the attribute-valuation curve for the difference in weights of losses and gains, as well as for the effect of diminishing sensitivity, the relevance of the attributes, the importance of the attribute for consumers, can be calculated as well.

Method

We examine and test the proposed approach in a controlled field experiment, involving 396 weekend visitors to an academic open-house at a Midwestern University. Assuming that attribute-valuation curves drive judgment and choice additively, we measure consumers' valuations of specific attribute levels as well as their valuations of the reference point related to the attribute under consideration using full factorial conjoint (1-9 Likert scale). Next, using the assumptions of reference dependence, loss aversion, and diminishing sensitivity, we examine the effect of reference points on attribute importance, and calculate two new attribute importance measures: *the determinance* and *relevance* of attributes.

Results and Conclusions

First, the results show that the determinance of attributes depends on the consumers' reference point, and on whether the attribute levels in the product space represent gains or losses relative to that reference point. The determinance of an attribute is

larger when the attribute levels represent losses compared to the consumers' reference point than when they represent gains. This effect is found both for the price and the taste attribute.

Second, building on this finding of the effects of reference points and loss aversion on the attribute determinance, we propose a new attribute-determinance measure, which explicitly accounts for the effects of reference points and loss aversion. The results suggest that the predictive validity of this new measure is higher than that of attribute-determinance measures that ignore the effects of reference points and loss aversion.

Third, we show that focusing on the attribute-valuation curve not only allows for the calculation of the determinance, but also for the relevance of attributes. By correcting the attribute-valuation curve for the difference in weights of losses and gains, as well as for the effect of diminishing sensitivity, the relevance of the attributes, the importance of the attribute for consumers, can be calculated as well. Reference points do not seem to influence the relevance of the attributes studied. Because the proposed approach generates two attribute-importance measures (with minimal burden on respondents), we conclude that the proposed approach is relatively efficient compared to methods that require respondents to execute two tasks to ascertain both the determinance and the relevance of an attribute.

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A Multidimensional Approach to Measuring Attribute Importance

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Abstract

Identifying product attributes that are important in consumer judgments is a key objective of consumer research. Unfortunately, the many available methods to identify important attributes often lack convergent and nomological validity. The objective of this research is to gain a better understanding of the determinants of this lack of validity and to outline a framework that will provide convergence for future studies. As such, this research is an important first step in identifying and developing methods that enable both practitioners and scholars to improve the validity of attribute importance measurement.

Introduction

Identifying product attributes that are important in consumer judgment and choice is a key objective of consumer research, both for practitioners and for scholars. Although there are a wide variety of methods to identify important attributes, the convergent validity among and nomological validity of different methods is often low (e.g., Jaccard, Brinberg, and Ackerman 1986; Heeler, Okechuku, and Reid 1979).¹ Low levels of validity can cause serious empirical and practical problems. Investigating consumer decision-making and behavior (as well as developing new products) strongly depends on understanding the importance of attributes.

Theoretical Background

Research on attribute importance measurement generally takes a *unidimensional approach* to attribute importance (e.g., Van der Pligt et al. 2000). Building on the work of Meyers and Alpert (1968), we provide a *multidimensional* research framework of attribute importance for understanding the lack of convergent validity among and nomological validity of methods for identifying important attributes. The research framework differentiates between three dimensions of attribute importance: the salience, the relevance and the determinance of attributes (Myers and Alpert 1968, 1977).² *Salience* reflects the degree of ease with which attributes come to mind when thinking about or seeing a certain product. The *relevance of attributes* reflects the general importance of attributes for consumers, and is largely determined by consumer desires. The *determinance* of attributes reflects the importance of attributes in judgment and choice.

The rationale for taking a multidimensional approach is that we expect that there is lack of convergent validity among and nomological validity of available methods for identifying important attributes because they identify different dimensions of attribute importance.

¹Convergent validity identifies whether different measurements reflect the same construct (i.e., are positively correlated). Nomological validity examines whether measures are related to other constructs in a theoretically meaningful way (i.e., predictive accuracy).

²We use the term "relevance" instead of "importance," as proposed by Myers and Alpert (1968), and use this latter term to reflect the general concept of attribute importance.

We use the framework to formulate hypotheses regarding which method identifies which specific dimension(s) of attribute importance. We focus on twelve common methods for identifying important attributes: 1) direct-rating method,* 2) direct-ranking method,* 3) point-allocation method,* 4) analytical hierarchy process,* 5) means-end chain method,* 6) multiattribute-attitude model, 7) trade-off method, 8) swing-weight method, 9) free-elicitation method,* 10) conjoint method, 11) information display board,* and 12) the use of verbal protocols* (due to space limitations, we cannot discuss each method in detail in this abstract). We hypothesize that the methods marked with an "*", identify attributes that are salient and valuable to consumers. The other methods are hypothesized to identify determinant attributes.

Method, Results and Conclusions

Our hypotheses are subsequently tested through a critical and integrative review of seemingly divergent findings in the literature. In line with hypotheses, the results suggest that there is *convergent validity* among and *nomological validity* of methods that identify the *same* dimension(s) of attribute importance. For instance, Srivastava, Connolly, and Beach (1995) report convergent validity among the direct-rating (1) and the analytical-hierarchy process methods (4), both of which we hypothesized that they identify salient and valuable attributes.

Additional evidence for our proposition was obtained by investigating the *discriminant validity* between methods that are hypothesized to identify *different* dimensions of attribute importance. In line with expectations, we find evidence for *discriminant validity* between methods that identify *different* dimensions of attribute importance. For instance, the lack of convergent validity among the direct-rating method (1) and the trade-off method (7) in Fischer's (1995) study may be attributed to the fact that the direct-rating method identifies salient and valuable attributes, while the trade-off method identifies determinant attributes.

Overall, we conclude that there is convergent validity among and nomological validity of methods that identify the same dimensions of attribute importance, while there is discriminant validity between methods that identify different attribute-importance dimensions. These results suggest that taking a multidimensional approach to attribute importance, and relating these dimensions to different methods, may actually be a first step toward more valid attribute importance measurement.

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Needle in the Cyberstack: Consumer Search for Information in the Web-based Marketplace

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

With a few simple clicks, consumers can navigate the World Wide Web, move from site to site, access and examine vast amounts of information unconstrained by time and place which have traditionally restricted consumer behavior in the physical marketplace. At least, that is according to theory. Information search on the Internet should, therefore, increase since search costs are reduced. But empirical evidence seems to suggest otherwise. Why aren't consumers searching for more information? Although the Internet reduces the cost of physical effort in moving from store to store, it may not reduce the cognitive cost of moving from site to site. Further, if consumers' motivation to shop online is to reduce effort and save time, why should one expect consumers to search for more information even if the search costs are relatively lower?

Several reasons suggest that conventional economic theories do not adequately explain consumer behavior in this new marketplace. First, the fundamental premise of economic theory is that information search will increase when search costs are reduced (Stigler 1961). Empirical evidence, however, has shown otherwise. Johnson et al. (2000) found that the levels of search across three product categories are fairly low, ranging from 1.1 stores for books to 1.8 stores for travel-related products. Another study by Jansen et al. (2000) revealed a similar pattern from the analysis of transaction from 18,113 users of Excite.com. Results show that Web queries are short. Most users had only few queries per search and 76% of users did not go beyond their first and only query.

Second, it is cognitive, not only physical effort, that affects online search behaviors. According to the Roper Starch Survey, it takes about 12 minutes on average before a user gets frustrated when searching the Internet. Although physical efforts (e.g., going to stores) have been reduced to finger clicks, the cognitive challenges of interacting with computers and online information remain that limit consumer information search within and between sites. This study is one of the first attempts to provide a systematic investigation of consumers' search behavior in the Web-based marketplace that provides some explanation for the discrepancy of theoretical proposition and empirical findings.

The study draws relevant theoretical perspectives from economics, psychology, and the wayfinding paradigm to investigate information search in the Web-based marketplace. The economics of information identifies two types of search costs that influence information search—external and cognitive. The costs of resources consumers invest in search, such as monetary costs to acquire information, or opportunity costs of time during acquisitions, are external search costs. Such costs are influenced by factors beyond consumers' direct control. They are exogenous and depend on situational influences. On the other hand, cognitive search costs are internal to the consumer and reflect the cognitive effort consumers must engage in to direct search inquiries, sort incoming information and integrate with stored information to form decision evaluations (Hauser, Urban and Weinberg 1993; Stigler 1991). They are influenced by consumers' ability to cognitively process incoming information.

In the psychology literature, consumers are viewed as information processors, interacting with a choice environment, acquiring and processing information and making a decision from alternatives (Bettman 1979). Bettman and Park (1980) theorized that

information search depends on both one's ability and one's motivation. Either determinant without the other inhibits information search. The notion that both ability and motivation are required to process information is consistent with Bettman's (1979) model and with Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) that suggests that both the ability and motivation to process information are necessary before someone engages in effortful cognitive processing. Similarly, it is logical to posit that both motivation and ability are required to acquire information via effortful search.

Since the online environment possesses several spatial characteristics, researchers have applied the wayfinding paradigm to analyze online navigation (Spence 1999; Hodkison et al. 2000). When users engage in goal-directed navigation, they usually use three methods: landmark, route and survey knowledge (Hodkison et al. 2000). Each method is used under different conditions and depends on the navigator's familiarity with the environment. Hodkison et al. (2000) elaborate these concepts in the online environment. Landmarks are stable and conspicuous in an environment (Dillion et al. 1993) and could include search engines and a user's frequently visited sites from bookmarks or manual entry of a URL. Route knowledge consists of instructions that must be followed to arrive at the desired destination. These instructions enable navigation although the user does not really know much about the environment.

The focus of this study is on external information search directed by a specific purchase under consideration. In the information-rich Web-based environment, consumers need to be transformed as computer users as well (Koufaris et al., 2001). They must be able to identify the location of information and employ efficient search techniques, hence, personal variables such as domain and system expertise are likely to affect consumers' search for information. Further, coupled with personal variables, system factors such as interruption and information load unique to the online environment are likely to impose search costs on consumers and influence the amount of information search.

Results from the pre-experimental survey show two different perceptions of search costs between the physical and online environments. Perceived external search cost is lower in the physical environment whereas perceived cognitive search cost is higher in an online environment. In the four 2 x 2 online experiments, using a custom-designed Web browser, domain expertise was found to be negatively related to perceived cognitive search cost, thus affecting information search between and within sites. In addition, subjects with a lower level of domain expertise search for more information among brick-and-click retailers. System expertise was found to significantly affect information search between sites only in the interruption experimental condition. No significant main effect of system variables—information load and interruptions—on information search was found. Overall, these findings suggest that although physical efforts have been reduced to finger clicks, the cognitive challenge of interacting with computers and online information limits consumer information search in the Web-based marketplace.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The Psychology of Auctions: Enriching Models of Bidder and Seller Behavior

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Despite increased consumer interest in auctions and several calls for more research on this topic (e.g., Chakravarti et al. 2002, Bazerman 2001, McAfee and McMillan 1987), the marketing and consumer research literature on this topic is sparse. Therefore, developing an enhanced understanding of participants' behavior in auctions is critically important. Both traditional and Internet auctioneers have acknowledged the importance of understanding consumer behavior, though little research has focused on this.

There is a large body of literature on the economic theory of auctions (for an overview, see Klemperer 1999). However, these are mostly normative models with restrictive assumptions regarding consumer values and bidding strategies. In fact, Rothkopf and Harstad (1994) have voiced the need to develop more realistic models of how bidders actually behave in auctions. However, little is known about how auction participants actually do behave, as opposed to how they ought to behave (Bazerman 2001). The focus of this session is therefore on several important behavioral aspects of auctions, bringing together three papers related to the psychology of auctions. These papers show how actual behavior of participants in auctions tends to differ from the predictions of normative models.

The first paper, by Subramaniam, Mittal and Inman, examines the difference in auction revenue for two different auction formats. Vickery's landmark paper (Vickrey 1961) has shown revenue equivalence for several different auction formats. However, economists have not yet studied a new popular hybrid auction format used by eBay. Results of this study indicate that Vickery's revenue equivalence theorem does not hold for a comparison of the English auction format (as used by Yahoo) and the hybrid strategy (as used by eBay).

The second paper, by Greenleaf, focuses on how sellers set reserve prices in auctions over time. A sequential auction experiment is used to study the anticipated effects of rejoicing (when the property sells for the reserve rather than due to competitive bidding) and regret (when the highest bid exceeds their value for the property but not the reserve) on reserve price. The results of this paper show that the impact of anticipated regret and rejoicing can be detected by observing how sellers set reserves when they learn over sequential auctions. This impact can also cause sellers' learning to be the opposite of predictions from normative models that omit regret and rejoicing.

Finally, Häubl and Popkowski Leszczyc investigate how two aspects of the intensity of competitive interaction in open ascending-bid auctions, the frequency of arrival of others' bids and the perceived number of bidders, influence consumers' valuations of auctioned items. Their results show that the dynamic competitive interaction among consumers in such auctions may result in *bidding frenzy*, a mental state characterized by a high level of arousal, a sense of competitiveness, and a strong desire to win. In contrast to normative models, the authors find that bidders' valuations are influenced by the intensity of bidding.

The papers complement each other by studying different aspects and biases of consumer behavior in Internet auctions. Together, they enhance our understanding of consumer decision making in Internet auctions, which is becoming an increasingly important area of consumer research.

“Revenue Equivalence in Online Auctions: The Case of Yahoo and eBay”

Ramanathan Subramaniam, Vikas Mittal, and J. Jeffrey Inman,
University of Pittsburgh

We compare the revenue generated in an English outcry auction to a hybrid auction. The hybrid auction combines the features of an English outcry auction and a second price sealed bid auction. In the hybrid format, the highest bidder and the second highest bid are known to all, and at the end of the auction duration the highest bidder gets the object at the second highest bid. Therefore, this hybrid is like a second price sealed bid auction with multiple rounds of bidding. This hybrid format is interesting as this is the format used in www.ebay.com. Theoretically, such a comparison is interesting as it establishes that the hybrid auction (ebay format) should yield a higher price realization than the English outcry auction *even in the presence of risk aversion*. In the past, it has been believed that the English Auction should generate the highest revenue when the bidders are risk averse (Milgrom and Weber 1982).

We argue that this hybrid auction has higher revenues because in such an auction the bidder has the opportunity to revise his valuation after observing rival *valuations* whereas in the English outcry, this revision is done after looking at the rival *bids* which yield less information than the valuation. Theoretically, this occurs because the hybrid being a second price auction, it is optimal for the bidder to bid his/her valuation at any point in time (if s/he chooses to bid).

We empirically examine the above hypothesis using data from two auctions: www.yahoo.com and www.ebay.com. Whereas ebay has exactly the same auction format as the hybrid described above, yahoo has the same format as the English outcry auction with reentry. Specifically, we examine the revenue realized from auctions for 206 matched pairs of objects in yahoo.com and ebay.com. The pairs are matched with respect to the object being auctioned and the duration of the auction. We also statistically control for the presence of common values, last minute bidding, auction duration, reserve price, number of participating bidders and jump bidding (in the English outcry format).

Results show that the revenue realized from the hybrid auction is higher compared to the English outcry format in the presence of common values. We also find that jump bidding depresses revenues in the English outcry auction. Consistent with Wilcox (2000), and Roth and Ockenfels (2002), last minute bidding also negatively impacts the revenue realized. In our study, we compare the revenues from two different auction formats while accounting for last minute bidding behavior while Roth and Ockenfels(2002) specifically study the last minute bidding behavior and relate it to the rules for ending an auction. They look at www.ebay.com and www.amazon.com which have the same auction formats but differ only in their ending rules. They find last minute bidding behavior to be more pronounced in ebay than in amazon. This result is primarily due to the ending rules in amazon where the auction ends only if there are no bids submitted for some fixed period of time (rather than having a “hard” ending time as in ebay). Our study thus relates to this issue as we recognize and control for last minute bidding while comparing the revenues from ebay and yahoo.

We also examine the impact of pre-emptive jump bidding in the English Outcry auction. Avery (1998) shows theoretically, that

such jump bidding behavior discourages other bidders resulting in higher payoffs for the bidder and thus reducing revenue for the seller. Our study verifies this empirically as we find that revenues from yahoo are less compared to ebay when there is last minute bidding.

In summary, by comparing the revenue from ebay and yahoo, this paper examines the revenue generated by a new auction format not studied in economic theory. This new format, that is ebay, yields higher revenue than the English outcry auction with reentry in the presence of risk aversion. Further, we are able to empirically show the effect of auction features such as jump bidding in Internet auctions. Finally, these results provide a possible reason for the popularity of the ebay format even when most bidders are risk averse. More importantly, support for this conjecture holds even when we control for last minute bidding. This suggests that the new hybrid format needs closer scrutiny on other dimensions as well.

“Reserves, Regret and Rejoicing in Open English Auctions”

Eric A. Greenleaf, New York University

One of the most important decisions that auction sellers must make is setting the reserve price, which is the lowest price at which they are willing to sell auctioned property to a bidder. If no bidder is willing to bid a price that at least equals the reserve price, the property does not sell (it is “bought in” in auction parlance) and it returns to the seller. The reserve affects the seller’s expected auction revenue. Optimal reserves have been modeled in an extensive theoretical auction literature (for reviews see Chakravarti et al. 2002; Klemperer 1999; McAfee and McMillan 1987; Rothkopf and Harstad 1994). However, there is still a need for work examines whether these auction models accurately reflect how sellers set reserves, and whether these models need to be enriched to accommodate additional aspects of seller decision making and utility.

This work proposes that anticipated regret and rejoicing (Bell 1982, 1983; Landman 1987, 1993; Larrick 1993; Loomes and Sugden 1982) affect how sellers set reserves in open English auctions, which are the most popular type of auction. We then test this proposition in a laboratory auction experiment. Anticipated regret occurs when decision makers believe, before making a decision, that after observing the decision outcome they will find out that they would have been better off had they made the decision differently. Anticipated rejoicing occurs when decision makers believe that after observing the outcome they will find out that the decision they chose made them better off than other decisions that they rejected. Anticipated regret and rejoicing have been found to influence consumer decision-making (Inman, Dyer, and Jia 1997; Inman and McAlister 1994; Simonson 1992).

One of the basic results of almost all normative models of reserves is that the optimal reserve price should exceed the value the seller places on the item being auctioned. We propose that sellers who set reserves this way will experience anticipated regret from the possibility that the highest bid in the auction will exceed their own valuation, but not be high enough to exceed the reserve. As a result, the property does not sell, and the seller finds out after the auction that he or she would have been better off setting a lower reserve, which would have allowed the property to sell. Sellers have negative utility for this anticipated regret.

We propose that sellers will experience anticipated rejoicing from the possibility that the property will sell for the reserve rather than due to competition among bidders. This result indicates to sellers that they successfully used the reserve to obtain some of the winning bidder’s auction surplus, by driving up the price that bidder must pay. Sellers have positive utility for this anticipated rejoicing. Although anticipated regret has been included in theoretical models

of bidder behavior at first price, sealed bid auctions (Engelbrecht-Wiggans 1989), it has not been included in models of open English auctions, or into models of seller behavior, nor have its effects been tested empirically. Rejoicing’s impact on auctions has not been studied.

We propose that the impact of regret and rejoicing can be observed by examining how sellers set reserves in a series of sequential auctions where important auction parameters are kept constant. This sequence allows sellers to learn as the auctions progress, so they can use the results they observe in the prior auction to help set their reserve in the next auction. We propose a learning model for how sellers will set reserves as they learn over sequential auctions. We show that certain aspects of learning for sellers who experience anticipated regret and rejoicing will be the opposite of learning if sellers do not experience these factors. This allows us to test for the presence of regret and rejoicing. We propose that this impact on learning will be particularly evident if sellers use a frequency heuristic (Alba and Marmorstein 1987; Alba et al. 1994; Hasher and Zacks 1984) to process information observed in prior auctions. More specifically, sellers using this heuristic will give relatively too much weight to which of four possible categorical auction outcomes occurred in the most recent auction (involving two ways that property can fail to sell, and two ways in which it can sell) and too little weight to the magnitude information which they can also observe, as embodied in the highest bid offered in the auction.

We use a laboratory auction experiment to test whether anticipated regret and rejoicing affect reserves. The 72 participants in this experiment act as auction sellers. To keep bidder behavior constant, the experiment uses simulated bidders. These bidders’ valuations and bidding strategy follow the independent private value model of bidder valuation (Vickrey 1961; Riley and Samuelson 1981). Sellers set reserves in a total of 36 consecutive auctions. These auctions contain four blocks of sequences that vary important elements of the auction - the number of bidders (3 vs. 6) and the seller’s own valuation (\$2500 vs. \$5500 experimental dollars) – to allow studying regret and rejoicing across a variety of auction contexts.

The results of the experiment support the impact of regret and rejoicing. We estimate the learning model using a repeated measures regression. We find that the impact of the auction outcomes proposed to cause anticipated regret, and anticipated rejoicing, have the signs consistent with those predicted for regret and rejoicing, rather than the opposite signs consistent with a learning process that does not incorporate regret and rejoicing. The results of this study suggest that anticipated regret and rejoicing should be incorporated into auction sellers’ utility functions.

“Bidding Frenzy: Intensity of Competitive Interaction Among Bidders and Product Valuation in Auctions”

Gerald Häubl and Peter T. L. Popkowski Leszczyc, University of Alberta

This paper examines how the intensity of the competitive interaction among bidders affects their valuations of an auctioned item. The dynamic process of determining a product’s selling price in open ascending-bid auctions is characterized by a sequence of increasing bids by multiple consumers, with direct competition among bidders for “winning” the auction (Ariely and Simonson 2003; Ku, Malhotra and Murnighan 2003). We propose that, as a result of the interactive nature of such auctions, bidders may experience a mental state, which we refer to as *bidding frenzy*, that is characterized by a high level of arousal or excitement, a sense of competition, and a strong desire to win. Furthermore, we hypoth-

esize that, all else being equal, greater levels of bidding frenzy will cause consumers to value an auctioned product more highly.

Our focus is on two key aspects of the intensity of competition in an auction on consumers' product valuations: (1) the frequency of arrival of others' bids and (2) the perceived total number of bidders participating in the auction. We propose that an auction participant's experienced level of bidding frenzy increases as the pace at which others submit bids increases and as the perceived number of bidders decreases.

The effects of bidding frenzy on consumers' product valuations were examined in five laboratory experiments. The studies used an innovative method, originally proposed by Häubl and Popkowski Leszczyc (2003), for measuring individuals' product valuations in computer-based ascending-bid auctions. This method involves simulated auctions in which subjects are under the illusion that they are participating in an online auction with a group of other bidders.

In Experiment 1, we investigated the effect of dynamic interaction among bidders on consumers' product valuations. To examine the net effect of being able to observe and react to others' bids on an auction participant's willingness to pay for a given product, we compared consumers' bidding behavior under two auction types: open ascending-bid (English) auctions and second-price sealed-bid auctions. These auction formats are strategically equivalent, i.e., they can be shown analytically to produce the same expected selling price (Vickrey 1961). However, they differ in one important respect central to our research. While English auctions allow dynamic interaction among bidders with publicly available high bids, sealed-bid auctions do not. We find that bidders' valuations of the auctioned product were significantly higher under the English versus the second-price sealed-bid format. Moreover, the positive effect of the interactive English-auction format on consumers' willingness to pay is mediated by increased levels of indicators of bidding frenzy. The remaining experiments focused on English-style auctions.

Experiment 2 examines the effects of two key aspects of competitive intensity on consumers' product valuations. Both the frequency of competitors' arrival (the bidding machine's bids) and the perceived number of active bidders in the online auction were manipulated independently. The results suggest that, all else being equal, higher frequency of competitors' bids leads to higher product valuations, and that the effect is again mediated by the level of bidding frenzy.

In Experiment 3, we investigate whether the results obtained in Experiment 2 are affected by the level of the bid increment and time pressure (by varying the time till the completion of the auctions). The results show again that higher frequency of competitors' bids leads to higher product valuations. However, the bid increment or the time pressure did not affect valuations.

In Experiment 4, we examine whether our results of bidding frenzy can be attributed to affiliation of bidders' valuations. Milgrom and Weber (1982) proposed the affiliated-values model to accommodate notions of consumer learning, value updating and learning of bidding strategy. However, little research is available on the behavioral underpinnings of affiliation and its impact on consumer learning and strategic behavior (Chakravarti et al. 2002). The results of Experiment 4 indicate that learning about the value of an auctioned item based on the observed bidding behavior of other auction participants can be ruled out as an alternative explanation of the effects.

Finally, in Experiment 5 we test for the importance of human interaction in the competitive bidding process. Our results indicate that a necessary condition for the experience of bidding frenzy is

that an auction participant competes directly with other human bidders rather than with a pre-programmed electronic bidding agent.

The results of our five experiments provide strong support for the hypothesis that, all else being equal, both greater frequency of arrival of others' bids and a smaller perceived number of bidders lead to higher product valuations. We also show that these effects on valuations are driven by the experienced level of bidding frenzy. These results are in sharp contrast to the normative theory of bidder behavior in auctions and represent an important building block of a behavioral theory of auctions.

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ROUNDTABLE
Repetition and Spacing of Marketing Stimuli: Implications for Memory

Discussion Leaders:

Sara L. Appleton-Knapp, San Diego State University

Kathryn Braun-LaTour, Marketing Memories

Hayden Noel, Baruch College

Much research has shown evidence for strong and robust effects on memory resulting from the spacing of repeated stimuli. Namely, to-be-remembered items presented without a lag between presentations (massed items) are not recalled as well as items that are presented with time or other items intervening between presentations (spaced items). However, researchers are divided on why spacing to-be-remembered items improves recall. Some work suggests that encoding variability drives the effect (Singh, Mishra, Bendapudi and Linville 1994; Unnava & Burnkrant 1991). Other results provide evidence for the role of study-phase retrieval practice (Appleton-Knapp et al. 1999; Janiszewski, Noel & Sawyer 2003). Reconstruction is also proposed as contributing to the effects of spacing (Braun 1999; Braun, Ellis & Loftus 2002; Jacoby 1978). Clearly more work is needed to disentangle these processes and to determine how they interact in producing improved memory for spaced material. An understanding of the spacing effect is particularly important for advertisers who can use findings in this area to optimize advertisements and to understand how varying lag lengths between presentations of ads can affect consumer memory.

The purpose of this roundtable is to bring together researchers with differing views to discuss their research and to gain a better understanding of how the spacing effect works and what predictions can be made about spacing in marketing. Braun-LaTour brings expertise in false memory research. Specifically, she can speak to how reconstruction processes can lead to false memories and how false memories are more likely to occur with long lags between product experience and advertising. Appleton-Knapp and Noel have both done work on study-phase retrieval and can discuss its contribution to the spacing effect. Noel, along with C. Janiszewski, is currently examining whether reconstruction can also account for this phenomenon and what are possible moderating variables. In addition, Appleton-Knapp has experimental evidence to show that under some conditions, variation in advertisements can attenuate the spacing effect. Much work on the spacing effect has been conducted in basic psychology. Another benefit of a roundtable on spacing led by this group of researchers is that they all are well-versed in the psychology literature on spacing. Braun-LaTour has worked with Loftus, one of the foremost psychologists working in the false memory domain and Appleton-Knapp has worked with R. Bjork, a renowned psychologist who studies memory processes. A discussion led by Appleton-Knapp, Braun-LaTour and Noel would explore new areas for research in spacing as well as expand the opportunity for collaborative work among researchers in related areas.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

New Frontiers in the Construction of Preferences

Nathan Novemsky, Yale University

The idea that preferences are constructed rather than retrieved from memory has been very influential in the thinking of many consumer choice researchers (e.g. Bettman, Luce and Payne, 1998). Studies derived from this idea have uncovered many interesting effects. The composition of the choice set has influenced this construction process and resulting preferences (e.g. attraction effect). The type of preference elicitation has also been shown to have important influences on preference construction (e.g. matching versus choice). While many strides have been made in understanding the preference construction process, there is still much to learn about the mechanisms of preference construction. This session can help develop some specific mechanisms involved in the construction process.

The first two papers are more theoretical and the third paper is more applied. In the first paper, techniques are borrowed from the attitude construction literature to help understand the mechanisms behind some common effects in preference construction. Using a feelings-as-information approach allows us to identify which context effects can be influenced by subjective feeling states at the time of the decision. This allows us to better understand how the context effects affect the preference construction process. The second paper looks at how the preference elicitation task (choice versus matching) affect preference construction. That research identifies simply arithmetic construction strategies (e.g. ratio or difference matching) that underlie responses to matching questions. These strategies allow us to refine previous choice theory (i.e. the prominence effect) by appealing to the low level methods of preference construction. The last paper looks at a real-world example of how matching and choice differ. It shows that very consequential decisions (housing prices) can be greatly affected by biases in the preference construction process.

LONG ABSTRACTS

“Parallels in the Underpinnings of Constructed Preference and Constructed Attitudes”

Nathan Novemsky, Yale University

Ravi Dhar, Yale University

Itamar Simonson, Stanford University

Norbert Schwarz, University of Michigan

The notion that preferences are constructed rather than retrieved from memory has been an important influence on consumer choice research (e.g. Bettman, Luce and Payne, 1998). Many effects, including choice context effects rely on this orientation. While constructionist ideas were flourishing in choice research, researchers studying attitudes were suggesting that attitudes are constructed rather than retrieved from memory. In fact, there are many parallels between the two bodies of research. Context effects based on temporary and often normatively irrelevant cues were having effects both on the construction of preferences and on the construction of attitudes. However, many ideas that might be applied to both attitudes and preferences have not crossed the boundary between these two fields. In the research described below, we attempt to introduce a key idea from attitude research (feelings-as-information) into preference contexts.

In attitude research, there is a line of research known as feelings-as-information (Schwarz, 1990; 2001) that shows that

individuals use their current subjective feeling state to inform their attitudes toward various objects. In our research we attempt to induce feelings (e.g. difficulty) in individuals making decisions and see how that affects their preference construction. We look at three preference construction effects: the compromise effect, the attraction effect, and the no-choice effect.

In several studies, we investigate the compromise effect. Demonstrations of this effect involve adding a third option to a two-option choice set in such a way as to increase the share of one the original options. For example, consider a choice between a high quality/high price option (B) and a low quality/low price option (C). When a very high price/very high quality option is added to the choice set, consumers seem to often choose the middle or compromise option (B) even more than they chose it in the two-option set. In our studies, we expand this design to include an inducement of a subjective feeling of difficulty. We manipulate the subjective difficulty of the choice by asking respondents if they can think of 2 or 10 reasons for their choice. Most people cannot think of 10 reasons in the choices we offer, so the 10-reason condition induces a strong subjective feeling of difficulty. When subjective difficulty is increased, we observe a greater compromise effect. This suggests that the compromise effect is the result of a deliberate strategy that the decision maker adopts to help them make a choice.

We also conducted several studies looking at the effect of adding a no-choice option to a decision. Similar to the compromise effect, we find that the no-choice option has a bigger effect when the subjective difficulty is high. This suggests that no-choice effects are also mediated by a deliberate strategy.

Interestingly, subjective difficulty does not always increase context effects in choice. We investigated another preference effect, the attraction effect. In the attraction effect, adding a third option to a two-option choice set that is dominated by one of the original options but not the other increases the share of the dominating option relative to the two-option set. Using the same 2 versus 10 reasons manipulation we varied the perceived difficulty of choices related to the attraction effect. We find that the attraction effect, as opposed to the compromise effect or no-choice effect, is attenuated when the subjective difficulty of the choice is increased. We believe that the attraction effect is reduced because it is a perceptual effect. That is, the attraction effect occurs because the dominated option makes one option more attractive. Choosers are generally not aware that the dominated option is having an effect on the choice. Rather, the chooser just perceives the dominating option as more attractive. Increasing the subjective difficulty interrupts this effect by encouraging the chooser to think more about the choice.

In the studies above, the difficulty in generating reasons for the choice is attributed to the difficulty of the decision-maker in making the decision. In follow-up studies, we manipulated whether the difficulty of generating reasons was attributed to the decision-maker having difficulty with the decision or to something else. For example, by telling respondents that other people on average can generate only a few reasons, the difficulty in generating reasons is attributed to the fact that too many reasons were requested not to the fact that the respondent is having difficulty with the decision. When the attribution for the feeling of subjective difficulty is directed away from the decision the influence of the number of reasons on the context effects is eliminated.

“The Psychology of Matching and the Prominence Effect”*Shane Frederick, MIT**Eldar Shafir, Princeton University*

Most objects of preference can be evaluated along multiple dimensions or attributes. Apartments vary on rent, square footage, and distance from work. Automobiles vary on gas mileage and safety. Gambles have different payoffs and probabilities. Thus, evaluating such options typically requires tradeoffs between attributes.

Determining the relative importance or weight people assign to various attributes is a central theoretical and practical topic in economics, psychology, decision analysis, and consumer research. Various elicitation methods have been used to infer attribute weights, including choice, matching, rating and pricing, and even asking people to directly graph their indifference curves (e.g., MacCrimmon & Toda, 1971).

These alternate elicitation procedures often imply different attribute weights. One of the most striking and widely cited examples of this was first reported by Slovic (1975), who found that respondents tended to select the alternative that was superior on the dimension they had previously rated as more “important” even though they were choosing between pairs of alternatives they had previously “equated” in a matching task. This effect, which Slovic first termed the “more important dimension hypothesis” was renamed the “prominence effect” by Tversky, Sattath, and Slovic (1988, p. 372), who replicated and extended Slovic’s original findings. The prominence effect has subsequently been replicated for many decision contexts and types of attributes (see, e.g., Fisher and Hawkins, 1993; Hawkins, 1994; Sekides, Ariely, & Constantine, 1999; Fischer et al., 1999). However, no consensus has emerged regarding its underlying cause(s).

In this paper, we explore the prominence effect in the context of the various strategies respondents use to solve matching tasks. We propose that respondents may match alternatives using one of three different strategies (*difference matching, ratio matching, and adjustment*), and that each may be used depending on the comparability of attributes, the units in which the scale values are denominated, the relative magnitude of the scale values, and even the ease of subtracting vs dividing. Depending on the particular task and attribute values, the application of such strategies can lead to patterns consistent with the prominence effect. However, it can also generate the opposite pattern (in which the more important attribute is weighted more heavily in matching than in choice). We show several such examples.

In our first study, we show that in cases where a ratio matching strategy is likely to be used, the prominence effect can be eliminated or even reversed merely by changing scale values. Indeed, we show that the most widely cited illustration of the prominence effect (Tversky, Sattath, and Slovic’s “lives vs. money” problem) disappears when the numbers used to describe lives and money respectively are swapped (Carmon and Simonson, 1998, show a similar effect in consumer choice problems).

In a second study, we show that the size and direction of the choice-matching discrepancy can be manipulated by changing the scale value at which one of the choice options is instantiated. In each case, we demonstrate both the prominence effect *and its converse*, merely by manipulating the attribute value at which one of options varies. This effect has been completely ignored in prior research on this phenomenon, because the choice task is ordinarily taken as the ground against which various versions of matching tasks are compared.

In a third study, we show that the imputed tradeoff rates can be dramatically affected by manipulating the ease with which people

can apply the various strategies (e.g. making the attribute levels multiples of each other may focus attention on ratios, rather than differences). We also show a new type of dominance violation that can arise when increasing the scale value switches people from focusing on ratios (which favors that item) to focusing on differences (which favors the competing item).

In summary, this paper offers a discussion of the meaning and imputation of attribute weights and attribute “importances,” and a typology of alternative strategies that respondents may use to generate responses in matching tasks, including *difference matching, ratio matching, and adjustment*. Against this background, we show that the size and even direction of the prominence effect can be influenced by factors that have nothing to do with attribute importance, per se, and that prior accounts of the prominence effect are, in this sense, misleading. However, we also show several phenomena that are qualitatively consistent with the prominence effect, including matching responses that are radically insensitive to *qualitative* task features (e.g. whether a graduate applicant is applying for admissions to an English Department or a Mathematics department) and choice proportions that seem inadequately sensitive to *quantitative* task features (e.g. the exact number of crimes prevented or false arrests created by a more aggressive crime prevention policy).

“A Behavioral Analysis of Real Estate Prices”*Christopher Hsee, University of Chicago**Yan Zhang, China Europe International Business School*

The present article examines the same pattern of units on different floors in a given building. There are three main sale patterns. The first is a flat pattern, in which all units are sold at about the same rate, whether the units are on good (high) floors or bad (low) floors. The second pattern is bad-before-good, in which low-floor units are sold faster than high-floor units. The last pattern is good-before-bad, in which high-floor units are sold faster than low-floor units.

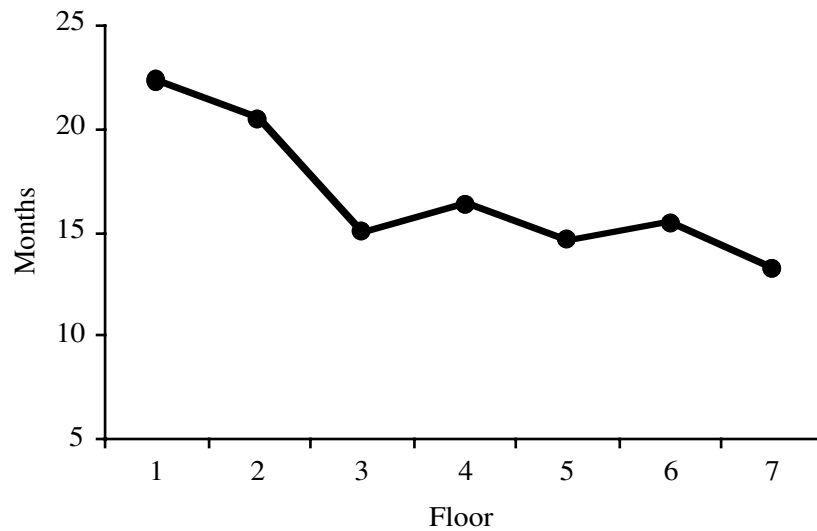
Theoretically, developers can precisely control the sales pattern of units in a given building through pricing. For example, if developers want a bad-before-good pattern, then they should price the low-floor units sufficiently low and price the high-floor units sufficiently high. If developers want a good-before-bad pattern, then they should keep the price difference between high and low-floor units small.

Our research examines whether developers price floors in such a way that the actual sale pattern matches their intended sale pattern. Our prediction is that it does not. Our theory is that when developers price the units, they are in a matching or anchoring-and-adjustment mode, but when buyers decide which unit to purchase, they are in a choice mode. We also know from extensive interviews that consumers consider floors as a more important (prominent) dimension than price. Based on prior research (Tversky, Sattath & Slovic, 1988), we predict that developers (the matchers) will give the more prominent attribute (floors) less weight than the consumers (the choosers). As a result, the final sales pattern will differ from the developers intended sales pattern, with high-floor units selling faster than intended by the developers.

In this talk, we will present both data from controlled questionnaires and actual real estate sales data from Shanghai, the most active real estate market in the world today. The results of our research can be summarized as follows:

1. Most professional developers and realtors prefer the flat sales pattern or the bad-before-good sales pattern over the good-before-bad sales pattern.

FIGURE 1



2. When developers price units, they use one of two strategies: (a) an anchoring-and-adjustment strategy (they anchor on the price of the average unit, and adjust the price for better or worse units); and (b) a matching strategy (they set the price of a given unit and ask potential buyers to match the price of a better or a worse unit so that these units would be equally attractive).
3. Given the prices set by those realtors or developers, the actual sales pattern differs from what they intend. The high-floor units usually go faster than low-floor units. The graph above (Figure 1) is the data of a typical new construction (7-story midrise), where the x-axis is floors, and the y-axis is the average number of months the units on a given floor are on the market before they are sold.
4. So far our focus has been on the discrepancy between the intended sales pattern and the actual sales pattern. We have not discussed what is the optimal (most profit-maximizing) sales pattern. We will also present some preliminary data showing that a flat pattern or a bad-before-good pattern may be better than a good-before-bad pattern. It suggests (a) that the realtors/developers' intuitions are right, and (b) that the actual sales pattern (i.e., good-before-bad) is suboptimal.

This research has important implications for pricing strategies. It is also an important application of a seemingly subtle BDT effect in the real world.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Beyond Brand Image: Analyzing the Culture of Brands

Craig J. Thompson, University of Wisconsin- Madison

In the conventional brand management literature, culture primarily enters into the theoretical equation through the construct of brand image. From this perspective, a brand is a central node of an associative network constituted by consumers' learned connections between the brand and a variety of cues, benefits, user types, and symbolic meanings (van Osselaer and Alba 2000). A related normative assumption is that managers can exert a fairly high degree of control over brand image through careful strategic choices and by avoiding a laundry list of commonplace pitfalls (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000; Keller 1998). This managerial-psychological view reduces culture to an array of information that individuals more or less incorporate into a cognitive schema, which then influences future information acquisition, attitudes toward the brand, and choice strategies (van Osselaer and Janiszewski 2001).

An emerging stream of consumer research suggests a far more encompassing and significant interrelationship between cultural processes/structures and brand meanings. Drawing from personal relationship theory, Fournier (1998) argues that consumers form emotionally-laden relationships with brands that anchor their self-concepts. Adopting an anthropological view, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) and McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002) analyze brands as the loci of complex communities that cut across conventional geographic and societal boundaries. Rather than just being a symbolic resource for the construction of personal identity, communal brands are a foundation of group identification and experiences of social solidarity. Holt (2002) analyzes brands in relation to the co-evolution of marketing practice and consumer culture. He argues that, in the postmodern marketplace, marketers strive to ingratiate and integrate their brands into various spheres of popular culture. Brands that successfully accomplish this cultural emplacement acquire an aura of authenticity which consumers then covet as they seek to create distinctive personal identities and, paradoxically, to resist conventional corporate influences.

A major implication of this research stream is that marketing managers exert far less direct control over brand meanings than is commonly supposed in the brand management literature (see Holt 2002, 2003; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Furthermore, a nexus of politics of consumption issues are raised by a dialectical view of brand cultures that have not been broached by the existing consumer research literature. For example, consumers may attribute considerable moral-political significance to their brand preferences, on the assumption that these valued brands are in some sense anti-corporate, and these perceptions can be easily leveraged for marketing advantage. A dialectical conception also calls into question a prominent assumption that subcultures exist as autonomous groups, whose authentic meanings are inevitably appropriated by parasitic corporations (e.g., Hebidge 1979). An alternative view developed in this session is that marketing, brands, and subcultures exist in a far more symbiotic relationship where marketing discourses actually help to crystallize a subcultural identity and its ideological outlooks.

The goals of this session were three-fold: 1) to further advance understanding of the different processes through which brand meanings are culturally constructed and in a dialectical fashion, exert an influence upon consumer culture and consumer identities; 2) to profile key theoretical benefits that accrue from viewing brands as cultural forms; and 3) to stimulate future research into brand cultures and in particular, their politicized consumption

meanings. Each paper in this special session offers theoretical insights into different aspects of this culture-brand dialectic.

Douglas Holt presented a historical analysis of the Patagonia brand. His brand genealogy traces the evolution of the Patagonia's branding strategies and its changing relationship to the subculture of outdoor-adventurers who had been were the brands core customers in the development of Patagonia as an iconic brand. Holt argued against the conventional view which holds that subcultural consumers act as cultural producers, who take control of the brand to create powerful brand meanings that often subvert the meanings created by the marketer. Instead, he demonstrates that Patagonia acted first as a cultural leader within the subculture, articulating the so-called "dirtbag culture" of hardcore climbers with particular skill while developing innovative climbing equipment. Once established, Patagonia then used the subculture as what Holt calls *discursive raw ingredients* to develop a myth about adventuring in nature, a myth which appealed powerfully to a mass market of liberal, ecologically minded non-adventurers.

Thompson and Arsel's presentation highlighted the influence that the Starbucks' brand exerts over the seemingly diverse cultural milieus of local coffee shops. Using a combination of phenomenological interviews and ethnographic observation, they built a case that the cultural discourses that surround Starbucks and the basic structure of its retail servicescape exert a systematic influence on the milieu of local coffee shops, regardless of whether these shops are positioned as countercultural havens or a third-place hangout (Oldenburg 1989) for middle-class professionals. They introduced the concept of a hegemonic brandscape to explain this ideological mapping of the local coffee shop scene and the centrality of Starbucks' meanings and ambiance to among local coffee shop patrons. Ironically, a key facet of the Starbucks' brandscape is a nexus of aesthetic and social criticisms commonly directed at this brand (i.e., the anti-Starbucks discourse) and which express a general cultural anxiety over the effects of globalization. The anti-Starbucks discourse imbues consumers' choices about coffee shop patronage with a set of political and moralistic meanings and it ideologically frames their experiences of local coffee culture. Reciprocally, meanings of Starbucks are constructed in relationship to the micro-market positions and customer communities of local coffee shops.

In keeping with this session's thematic core, O'Guinn and Muniz discussed the new political left's strategy of fighting market capitalism's hegemony through purchases from major corporations. While all across the spectrum brands are becoming more a part of political discourse, the new left's belief that they are striking blows against the empire by purchasing is particularly noteworthy in its oddity and paradox in the stream of modernist market critique. Their new left informants' sincere (and purchase motivating) belief that by buying an Apple MacIntosh they are actually behaving in the tradition of sixties radicals is either testament that since mid twentieth century, there is absolutely nothing one can do politically outside the consumption juggernaut (Frank 1997), or that brands are (whatever the historical trajectory) increasingly politicized and must be conceived as socio-political entities. As branded consumption becomes more and more central to contemporary social existence, so the traditional lines (real or imagined) between the political fashion and material fashion fade. This phenomenon has many causes, but easy and inexpensive social aggregation and consumer-

to-consumer communication through the WWW has made the further politicization of brands all the more inevitable. O'Guinn and Muniz develop this theoretical implication through both face-to-face and computer mediated environment data on several brands.

In her introductory comments as discussant, Susan Fournier noted the theoretical and methodological diversity of the session audience, and called for the creation of bridges from postmodernist critiques of brand phenomena to actionable, substantive contributions in the brand management domain. What does the Starbucks study, for example, suggest about theories and methods for segmentation and positioning? Do these insights suggest a way to *define* rather than *induct* perceptual dimensions for brand positioning? Fournier also called for the crossing of methodological bridges to further develop current insights, as, for example, with survey tracking research to reveal trends in the politicization of brands, or field experiments to investigate the temporality and causality of manager-created versus consumer-created brands. Finally, Fournier encouraged debate regarding the relative utility and value of critical theory to brand theory development, particularly given the anti-business Marxist roots of the perspective, and the possibility for insight creation through alternate analytic paths.

Much discussion ensued and a good time was had by all. Afterwards, everyone put on their comfy Patagonia fleeces, relaxed with a nice Starbucks' double cappuccino, and typed notes on the session into their super cool Apple iBooks.

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The Polit-Brand and Blows Against the Empire: The Collectively Approved Brands of the New-New Left

Thomas C. O'Guinn, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Albert M. Muñoz, Jr., DePaul University

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Is that a real Poncho, or is that a Sears Poncho?
Frank Zappa

O'Guinn and Muniz present theory and data regarding the "new", (actually the *new-new*, post- 1972, U.S./Western Europe) political left's *leitmotif* of fighting market capitalism's "hegemony" through purchases (as opposed to boycotts of major brands from major corporations). In other words, the new left revolutionary revolts by buying things, but only those things that are deemed appropriate to their socio-political identity, and their socio-political agenda. These are the "polit-brands" of the new left. While the use of brands in "revolution" has been discussed elsewhere, most notably in Frank's (1997) *Conquest of Cool*, we offer a significantly different take on the dynamics and meaning of the phenomenon.

Circa 1972 the old "new left," for all intents and purposes, perished (Schulman 2001). It was replaced by a more individualistic and consumption ambivalent movement. Outside of university English departments, neo-new left-revolutionary politics increasingly play out in battles no longer about consuming or not consuming, but in discourse over the identification, sanctioning, and championing of *which* brands are the best vessel for one's "alternative", albeit *comfortable* politics. The emergence of the "new" political left of the 1990's and beyond provides us with a particularly accessible opportunity to see the mixing of consumer culture and politics, right where they exist: in plain sight. The new left's oft observed belief that they are somehow striking blows against the capitalist empire by purchasing major branded goods is particularly noteworthy in its oddity and paradox in the long stream of modal modernist market critique. Yet, rather than be essential-izing in our theory, and dismissive in our tone, we hold that these acts are not necessarily inauthentic, wrongheaded, uninformed, unimportant, or ineffective.

We like others, argue that not only is consumption inherently political, but always has been. This contrasts with the noted a-historicism of critical theory. But, not desiring to be hoisted on our own designer petard, we just as quickly acknowledge the very prominent pastiche of blended branded-politics and branded-lifestyles in the contemporary consumer milieu. We further assert that it is high time to see and study these contemporary phenomena absent so much heavy-handed and bulky modernist baggage.

Modal modernist critical thought operates on the central assumption that market capitalism (and contemporary consumer culture) is problematic, and should be critiqued...and, not inconsequently should reify/deify the cultural critic along the way. Traditional social theory assumes that in-authenticity and false consciousness typify the consumption modality. So, when critical theorists encounter the new left's belief that by buying only "approved" brands they are social movers undifferentiated from sixties style radicals, these consumers are typically dismissed as duped, and the entire situation testament to the inescapable web of capitalist hegemony and consumption juggernaut (Frank 1997).

We believe that such totalizing formulations are inadequate for the task of understanding the phenomena before us. Sweeping dismissals never allow a finer grained look at brands (or anything else for that matter), contextualized by their history, as politicized

social constructions. Our paper reports both face-to-face and computer mediated data on several brands to sharpen this theoretical focus. We argue that notions of branding and their place in social thought have something to gain from the broadening border-crossing of brand and politics.

We take as given and obvious that brands are social constructions, are socio-political, and always have been. And like Frank (1997), we believe that consumers, particularly youth, play out many of their revolutionary impulses with branded products. Where we differ markedly from Frank (1997), and other critical scholars are (1) the assertion that these acts of marketplace social revolution are fundamentally inauthentic, merely fashion and the work of the duped and *hegemon-ized* masses; and (2) the assertion that they are fundamentally ineffective. We assert that one does not have to take a critical stance to either explain or appreciate this phenomenon. It is not necessary.

Polit-brand data are presented in the form of *Apple, Ben and Jerry's, Carhart, Diesel, MAC, REI, Tom's of Maine*, and most notably, *Sweat-X*. We discuss these brands in the context of "authenticity," the "alternative" label, their trajectory, their role in resolving contradictions of self interest and fashion, brand social construction and "ownership," and most importantly, achieving demonstrable and meaningful political goals.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Corporate Social Responsibility: A Consumer Perspective

Jill G. Klein, INSEAD

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged in recent years as both an important academic construct and a pressing corporate agenda item. Firms have been found to engage in socially responsible behaviors not only to fulfill external obligations such as regulatory compliance and stakeholder demands, but also due to enlightened-self-interest considerations such as increased competitiveness and improved stock market performance e.g., Drumwright 1994; 1996; Waddock and Smith 2000).

Growing interest in CSR has sparked new research within marketing on the effects of CSR on consumers (e.g., Brown and Dacin 1997; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). In this session we present three papers that address a key issue related to the topic of CSR: the impact of a firm's CSR activities on consumer judgments of the products and brands of the firm. The research presented here goes beyond the few initial studies within marketing on CSR by trying to understand the conditions under which product judgments are affected by CSR perceptions.

The first paper, by CB Bhattacharya and Sankar Sen, recognizes that our current measurements of the effects of CSR are underdeveloped. They present a framework for measuring the effectiveness of a firm's social initiatives. In doing so, they conceptually distinguishing social initiatives from the traditional marketing mix (e.g., brand, advertising). Further, they focus on the potentially multi-faceted impact of the CSR activities: beyond the "primary" impact on the brand and company to the "secondary" outcomes related to partner organizations (e.g., nonprofits) as well as the cause/issue promoted by the company.

A firm's economic benefits from CSR have been documented in the link to consumers' positive product and brand evaluations, brand choice, and brand recommendations (Brown and Dacin 1997; Drumwright 1994; Handelman and Arnold 1999; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). Yet, existing research has usually found CSR effects on product judgments to be weak or indirect (Brown and Dacin 1997; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). Our session includes two papers that examine factors that intensify the link between CSR and perceptions of products. Yeosun Yoon and Zeynep Gürhan-Canli find that consumers use CSR information to infer product quality only when the firm's CSR activities are relevant to judgments of corporate ability. Niraj Dawar and Jill Klein find that CSR reputation plays an important role during a product crisis. Consumers are more likely to attribute blame to the firm for a crisis when the firm has a poor record on CSR. When the record is positive, however, consumers blame other parties, and brand image remains intact. Thus, CSR activities can act as an insurance policy against the potentially damaging effects of a product harm crisis.

Corporate Social Responsibility has become a major issue for corporations, yet little research has been conducted thus far on consumer behavior aspects of CSR. The goal of this session is to increase our understanding of how consumers perceive and react to CSR activities. Craig Smith, who is an expert on corporate ethics and ethical issues in marketing will be the discussant for the session. In a brief presentation he will tie the research presented in the papers to more general issues of business ethics and recent trends in corporate social responsibility. He will then lead a discussion between attendees and presenters.

This session will appeal to a broad segment of ACR participants. Those interested in CSR issues, business ethics, non-profit

marketing and social marketing will find the papers very relevant to their work. Further the session will attract those interested in brand image, product judgments, and corporate communication.

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"Measuring the Effectiveness of Corporate Social Initiatives: A Consumer-Centric Perspective"

CB Bhattacharya, Boston University
Sankar Sen, Baruch College

Today, more companies than ever before are backing corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives such as corporate philanthropy, cause-related marketing, minority support programs and socially responsible employment and manufacturing practices, with real financial and marketing muscle. The Web sites of more than 80% of the Fortune-500 companies address CSR issues, reflecting the pervasive belief among business leaders that CSR is not only an ethical imperative but also an economic one in today's national as well as global marketplace. Given this increasing emphasis and resource deployment on CSR, business leaders are realizing the urgent need to measure the effectiveness of various CSR programs. Not surprisingly, many companies have embraced practices such as social audits, corporate social reporting and the triple bottomline (Panchak 2002). From the academic side, there have been attempts to link corporate social initiatives to a variety of aggregate outcomes such as financial performance indices and reputation (e.g., Davenport 2000; Simpson and Kohers 2002). What is lacking, however, in both theory and practice are customer-driven measures of CSR effectiveness (the Cone/Roper studies being the sole exception). Since market forces drive much of the momentum behind CSR initiatives, taking a meaningful and accurate read of customers' reactions to firms' CSR initiatives is, from a management perspective, essential.

In this paper, we adopt a customer-centric view to propose a framework for measuring the effectiveness of a firm's social initiatives. In doing so, we start by conceptually distinguishing social initiatives from the traditional marketing mix (e.g., brand, advertising). We contend, unlike prior research (e.g., Frankental

2001), that a key distinction between marketing mix attributes and CSR initiatives lies in the potentially multi-faceted impact of the latter: beyond the “primary” impact on the brand and company (the sphere of marketing mix measurement), CSR initiatives can also influence “secondary” outcomes related to partner organizations (e.g., nonprofits) as well as the cause/issue promoted by the company. For example, the cross-sector partnership between Home Depot and Habitat for Humanity may not only influence customers’ perceptions and behaviors towards Home Depot and its products, but also influence donation and volunteering behavior towards Habitat as well as attitudes towards housing for the underprivileged. Moreover, these secondary outcomes of CSR are integral but thus far unconsidered components of CSR effectiveness. In light of the extant emphasis on the primary outcomes (albeit in different contexts) in the marketing literature, we will pay particular attention to the secondary outcomes.

Our framework, based on prior research and focus groups, will relate different types of CSR initiatives (e.g., those internal to the firm vs. those external to the firm) to expected outcomes and propose both attitudinal and behavioral measures for assessing the effectiveness of CSR initiatives. We shall conclude with an empirical example that illustrates the utilization of the measures in practice.

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“The Effects of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Product Quality Evaluations”

Yeosun Yoon, Rice University

Zeynep Gürhan-Canli, University of Michigan

This research investigates the effects of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on consumers’ product quality evaluations. While many studies in the CSR area show positive effects of CSR activities on consumers’ company evaluations and purchase intentions, it is not clear when and how CSR activities influence product quality evaluations. Among a few studies that investigate the effect of CSR on product quality evaluations, Brown and Dacin (1997) suggest that CSR associations indirectly affect global product evaluations through the overall company evaluations. Similarity, Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) argue that a company’s CSR activity can influence purchase intentions both indirectly and directly. However, detailed new product quality information as well as information about companies were given in both studies, while consumers often have to evaluate a new product without such clear information.

In this study, we propose that when information about new product quality is not very clear, consumers may try to evaluate product quality based on CSR information. When the area of a CSR activity is product-relevant and has direct implications for product quality evaluations, the CSR activity will have a direct effect on

consumers’ product quality evaluations. In other words, if consumers evaluate the CSR activity positively (negatively), they will infer that the product has higher (lower) quality. On the other hand, when the area of a CSR activity is not product-relevant and has no direct implications for product quality evaluations, the CSR activity will influence product quality evaluations only when consumers can infer Corporate Ability (CA) from the description of the CSR activity. Thus, we hypothesize that CA evaluations will mediate the effects of CSR on product quality evaluations.

We employ two experiments to examine when and how CSR activities affect perceived product quality. In experiment 1, we manipulate product relevancy of a CSR domain and valence of CSR activity. Specifically, the study employs a 2 (relevancy of CSR: high vs. low) X 2 (valence of CSR: positive vs. negative) between-subjects design with two control groups. We used a fictitious clothing manufacturer in a foreign country and told subjects the company was planning to introduce their products in their local area. No other information about the company was given, and subjects in two control groups received a real sample of a T-shirt made by the company and were asked to evaluate its quality at this point without CSR information. In addition to the company information, subjects in experimental groups received additional information regarding a CSR activity run by the same company. Based on the CSR literature (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001) and our pre-test results, we used the issue of labor practices (e.g., sweatshops) as a high relevance CSR activity and the issue of diversity in employment (e.g., supporting ethnic minority) as a low relevance CSR activity. We created the positive and negative CSR Record scenarios similar to the ones Sen and Bhattacharya used. The valence and specificity of CSR information of the high relevance CSR activity were comparable to those of the low relevance CSR activity. After reading the company and the CSR information, subjects received the same T-shirt that subjects in the control groups got and were asked to evaluate the quality of it. Our results suggest that product quality evaluations vary by valence of the high relevance CSR activity but not the low relevance CSR activity. The product was perceived to have higher (lower) quality when the high relevance CSR activity was positive (negative). On the other hand, consumers evaluated the quality of the product no differently after learning about the low relevance CSR activity regardless of valence of the CSR activity.

In experiment 2, we seek to enhance the findings from experiment 1 by examining when and how consumers make inferences about product quality even when a company supports a low relevance CSR activity. Specifically, we examine the extent to which CSR information affects perceptions of corporate ability (e.g., ability to manufacture high quality products) and how perceptions of corporate ability mediate the effects of CSR on product quality evaluations. We suggest that CSR information has a positive effect on corporate ability when consumers infer from such information that the company is sincerely committed to consumers’ well-being. This experiment is currently being designed and the data will be collected in the summer.

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“The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Consumers’ Attributions and Brand Evaluations after a Product-Harm Crisis”

Niraj Dawar, *Western Ontario*
Jill G. Klein, *INSEAD*

From a marketing perspective, the firm’s economic benefits from CSR have been documented in its link to consumers’ positive product and brand evaluations, brand choice, and brand recommendations (e.g., Brown and Dacin 1997; Drumwright 1994; Handelman and Arnold 1999; Sen and Battacharya 2001). Through a variety of theoretical lenses, the important contributions of these studies have been to demonstrate that (1) CSR plays a role in consumer behavior, over and above economic or ‘rational’ considerations such as product attributes; and (2) CSR has a spillover or ‘halo effect’ on otherwise unrelated consumer judgments, such as the evaluation of new products.

Yet these studies have also shown that the effects of CSR on consumer behavior are not overwhelmingly strong. Their results indicate that while CSR plays a role, traditional constructs such as product attributes and consumption goals still account for the bulk of the variance in consumer behavior. Existing studies have sought to examine the impact of CSR on routine product and brand evaluation processes such as consumers’ new product judgments. But CSR may not be diagnostic in these situations, and therefore, CSR effects may not be prominent. Instead, CSR may have its most marked effect where ordinary information about a company and its products is deemed insufficient to arrive at an informed judgment. We look at CSR effects in non-routine consumer judgments, specifically, a product harm crisis.

Negative events such as product-harm crises tend to trigger elaborate cognitive processing, including attributions of responsibility (Fiske 1980; Folkes 1984; Weiner 1986). These attributions are important from a marketing perspective because they form the foundation of consumers’ subsequent brand perceptions and behavior. Weiner’s (1980) widely used attribution model conceptualizes three causal dimensions of attribution that lead to an overall judgment of responsibility or blame: (1) the locus of the behavior (the event that triggers the crisis), which can be internal or external to the actor (in our case, the firm); (2) the stability of the behavior, which can be unchanging or temporary; and (3) the controllability of the behavior, which can be within or outside the control of the actor. If the locus is internal, and the behavior is stable and controllable, observers (in our case, consumers) tend to attribute responsibility to the actor, and subsequent consumer behavior such as blame or anger, is directed toward the actor. If on the other hand, the locus is external, and the behavior is temporary and uncontrollable, attributions will tend to be made to external factors (Folkes 1984). The recent product-harm crisis involving Firestone tire blowouts that allegedly has led to consumer deaths, and the subsequent recall of millions of tires, helps illustrate this model of the attribution process. If consumers believe that the tires were poorly made, that Firestone has had a history of product-defects, and that they could have averted the problems with better quality control, they will be likely to attribute responsibility to Firestone. In contrast, if they believe the problems were caused by harsh driving or vehicle conditions, that this is the first time Firestone’s tires have been implicated as the cause of accidents, and that driving and vehicle conditions are in fact outside the control of the tire manufacturer, they will be more likely to attribute responsibility to external factors, such as to the vehicle manufacturer or to driving conditions. Our intention in studying attributions in a product-harm crisis setting is to establish whether CSR antecedents bias locus, stability, and controllability attributions.

In our research, we examine how consumers’ prior impressions of a firm’s CSR image affect their attributions of locus, stability and control. We conducted two studies, one using a fictitious firm and one using an actual firm, with a total of 300 subjects recruited at a shopping mall. In these studies, an oil company’s reputation related to treatment of the environment was manipulated. (In a control group, the real company’s image was measured rather than manipulated in order to control for demand effects.)

Results showed that the company’s CSR image played an important role in determining attributions, which, in turn, influenced blame (attributions acted as a mediator of blame). Further, brand image and purchase intentions were predicted by the degree to which the company was blamed. When the company’s CSR image was negative, consumers made attributions that led to blaming the firm, and this blame negatively impacted brand image and purchase intentions. When the company’s image was positive, however, consumers made attributions that implicated other parties and the firm’s reputation was left intact. Thus, a positive CSR image can be viewed as an insurance policy against suffering the full negative effect of a product harm crisis.

This research contributes to a better understanding of the role of CSR in consumer behavior. CSR effects on attributions and brand evaluations provide a promising avenue for further exploration. In particular, experimental research on consumers’ contingent use of CSR information can help define conditions under which CSR will or will not affect consumer behavior. The goal of this research is to demonstrate that strong and direct effects on consumer behavior do exist and to point future researchers to settings in which they are relatively easy to detect.

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Consuming Modernities: The Global Youth Segment as a Site of Consumption

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In the marketing literature youth has been held up as the prototypical example of a global segment (see for example Hassan and Katsanis 1991, Tully 1994, *Marketing News* 2002). The basis for the excitement about the youth segment (under various names such as the 'teen segment', the 'Gen X' culture', 'baby busters', 'the MTV Generation' etc.) largely stems from the allegedly uniform consumption habits of young people all over the world – their clothing, music tastes, and media habits.

This paper seeks to explore aspects of the globality of the global youth segment by analysing young consumers' discourses of identity and consumption within a system of centre-peripheries (Hannerz 1996) of the global cultural economy (Appadurai 1990). It is suggested that the global youth segment constitutes a global site of consumption in which multiple discourses of modernity are played out according to local positions in relation to the global cultural economy.

Within consumer research the main focus on young people as consumers has generally followed two strands: one which deals with the notion of adolescents and the dark side of consumption and the study of the socialization processes of consumption among young people (cf. Roedder John 1999). These two strands of research, while valuable contributions in terms of policy and to the understanding of consumer socialization, have given very little voice to the consumers in question and has not analyzed cultural or global aspects of young consumers' lives.

The study was conducted as a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995). Data was collected among high school students in Denmark and Greenland and in an urban and rural context in each of the localities. From the ethnographic material we identify several discourses of identity and consumption and analyze these in relation to modernity and globalization. The material from the Danish context suggests that consumers in this context account for identity and consumption along the lines suggested by theorists of late modernity – that is, a discourse of the reflexive construction of individual identity. In the Greenlandic context we identify several discourses revolving more around collective logics in relation to ethnicity, post-colonialization and globalization, hence highlighting other aspects of modernity.

The identity discourses identified facilitate a broadening of the notions of identity in late modernity. The predominant model of identity posits the increased reflexivity of the construction of identities whose focal point is the individualized biography, due to new time and space configurations (Giddens 1991), global consumer culture (Bauman 2001), and the dissolving of traditional modern social categories such as class (Beck 2001). The presence of the relatively collective discourses in Greenland, it is argued, can be seen as (being) products of the locality's position in the periphery of the global cultural economy. This position (and the socio-cultural history of Greenland) means that other discourses are prevalent and foregrounded, pushing the discourse of individual self-realization into the background. While the discourses identified in the Greenlandic context are situated within the realm of late modernity, they are different answers to different problems of late modernity than those pointed out by late modern theorists. Miller (1996) in this respect has pointed out that while the present theorizing of identity in late modernity provides an interesting analysis of how the notion of identity itself becomes what is of

concern for individuals (which is why it is a reflexive identity), the theories do not rest well with the experiences and discourses emerging from other places in the global cultural economy outside of the Occidental sphere.

That young consumers buy the same things is taken as evidence that they have shared preferences. However, preference implies choice among alternatives. Since the institution of youth as an identity space is a relatively recent invention (primarily arising in the post-WWII era) and often one that continuously seeks to break with tradition, local culture cannot significantly provide youth cultural imagery. The only choice is Western products (or Westernized local youth cultural products such as local versions of rock music). The institution of youth, and the historically global nature of youth culture, can therefore be said to be what facilitates the apparent similarities in consumption preference.

The multiplicity of discourses identified in the ethnographic material are analyzed as emerging from localities' positions in relation to the global cultural economy, and hence the meeting with modernities. Youth as an institution is one aspect of global modernity, and it makes itself present through the market representations of youth. We argue that the global youth segment, rather than constituting a homogeneous group of consumers with similar preferences, is a site of consumption, a representation of the idea of youth which is available globally. The global youth segment is used for different purposes in different localities, and hence is a site in which locally constituted discourses of identity can be articulated.

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Tastes, Distastes and Disgusts: Young Consumers' Positive and Negative Experiences of Food

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ABSTRACT

A number of authors have explored dislikes, distastes and the associated emotion of disgust, yet there has been little discussion of the development of dislikes and distastes in children. Eight children between the ages of 5 and 10 were given disposable cameras and asked to photograph their likes and dislikes. Following the development of the photographs the children discussed their selections (a third of which featured food products). We explore the photographs and the explanations offered by the children within the context of socialization and develop our analysis around a number of emergent themes.

INTRODUCTION

A limited number of authors have begun to explore dislikes, distastes (e.g. Banister and Hogg 2001; Hogg and Banister 2001; Wilk 1995; 1997) and the associated emotion of disgust (Rozin and Fallon 1987), yet little research has considered the developments of dislikes and distastes in children. This paper focuses on one aspect of a larger study, which aimed to explore children's socialization and their formation of tastes and distastes. The paper focuses on young consumers' preferences in the category of food and drink. We report the findings of a qualitative study, which focused on pupils in an infants and junior school in Yorkshire, England. Eight children were given disposable cameras and the task of taking photographs that represented their likes and dislikes. Once the films were developed, the children were interviewed individually about their choice of photographs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Childhood

Childhood is not simply a biological state of being, but a fluid stage of the social life course. The way in which we view childhood has been subject to change. In one sense Western children are currently seen as vulnerable, innocent and passive, as compared with their past roles as active participants in industrialization, working in factories or mines. The current law and moral discourse fosters common belief systems that harbor children within a sphere of education and protection, encouraging the safe arrival of adulthood. What could be termed a suitable 'cultural pedagogy' is translated onto children, suggesting power, yet also resistance, stemming from spheres such as schools and the family environment (Steinberg and Kincheloe 1997). Ironically, against this backdrop of protection and assumed passivity is a phenomenon, which marketers term KGOY ('kids getting older younger') reflecting children's increased presence in the marketplace where they are recognized as active and savvy consumers. Children represent a market in their own right (encouraged by the pressure on parents to give ever increasing amounts of money or allowances), as well as important persuaders of family spending. Recent figures suggest that the total UK market estimate for children's spending power is £30 billion, which includes children's annual pocket money (£2.3 billion), and their parent's spending on clothes, food and even holidays (Hollis 2002:14).

Socialization

Consumer socialization refers to the "processes by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the market place" (Ward 1972:2). Through socialization, consumers learn to agree on shared meanings for some symbols, but also to develop individual interpretations of their own (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998). During their early years, the central feature of socialization is the family (Gunter and Furnham 1998; Roedder John 1999; Turner 1970) and it is generally accepted that other major factors are age, peers, culture and mass media. With age, more personal time and space becomes available to children (Solberg 1997) which they can use independently; offering more scope for increasingly personalized activities, often initiating self-directed play (Woodhead 1997). Time spent at friends' houses expose the child to different contexts. This time and space could provide the environment within which to empower the child, as supervised, self-initiated and directed play is seen as a valuable source of learning. An 'adult world' exists, which could be considered to exclude children. However, the development of child-specific merchandise predominantly excludes adults. This provides time and space, reinforcing a permitted retreat—privacy and company with one's own kind.

Children make their own interpretations of the adult world, making decisions and presumptions about what adults do (Steinberg and Kincheloe 1997, Belk 1984). Their perspective of the adult world thrives on a somewhat limited understanding and children therefore become susceptible to stereotyping, with the (non) ownership of goods reflecting this (Gunter and Furnham 1998; Belk et al 1982). This is also highlighted in stereotypical parental choices, which emphasize the ideological inclusion and exclusion of products and brands for the child.

Taste: A Form of Classification

The goods that children consume and the differentiation they achieve through the symbolic properties of products and brands should be understood as 'socially patterned' by cultural standards (Lury 2001). This is because distinction is made relationally in comparison to others (Lury 2001) with 'membership' and 'reference groups' employed as sources of comparison and evaluation (Bearden and Etzel 1982).

Bourdieu (1984) views taste as one of the ways in which people classify and organize symbolic meaning with regard to class relations. Tastes can be fashioned in such a way that social positioning within group identities can be swayed negatively or positively by lifestyle choices (Bourdieu 1984). Bourdieu (1984) describes this process of learning through combining past and present experiences as culminating in a 'habitus', an organizing system or structure. This habitus becomes internalized and transformed into a way of thinking, which creates significant meaning to the self, within and amongst the group, serving as a pivot by which groups and individuals symbolically display their 'cultural capital'. In other words, consumption and related behavior is a way in which group hierarchies are regulated by the signs and symbols that are or are not exhibited (Oyersman and Markus 1990).

Tastes will often reflect previous experiences, suggestive of reflexive engagement with memories, triggered through current events. Through taste aversion learning and negative reactions to culprit foods, ill feeling becomes attributed towards the smell or

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taste of previously unpleasant experiences (Zimbardo and Weber 1994). New skills and knowledge acquired by children are negotiated through the recognition and splitting of good and bad experiences and attributing those experiences symbolically to products and brands (Klein 1987). Wilk (1997) argues that to learn what can be considered tasteful is basically learning what bad taste is, and in the case of food, what tastes unpleasant.

Christensen (1993) notes how children 'stare' at others, making judgments leading to inclusion or exclusion within the spatial location, highlighting how matters of distaste are located within normal appearances and then considered deviant. Research has also suggested that dislikes are easier to articulate than favorite products and this highlights the tendency of consumers to attempt to blend in with their peers (Wilk 1995). The decision not to consume is often achieved through the serious contemplation of what can be considered as 'not us' or 'not we' (tribal). Therefore, the 'not me' aspect of tribal community life equates to a certain embodiment which equates to 'them' (Maffesoli 1996).

Rozin and Fallon (1987) provide a discussion of the development of disgust in children and conclude that disgust is not present at birth, but that at some point before reaching five years of age, those negative responses to objects that are disgusting to adults appear. Disgusts and distastes can be distinguished because of the basis for rejection. Disgust is depicted as having an ideational basis for rejection (i.e. offensiveness and contamination), whereas rejection on the basis of distastes is primarily motivated by sensory factors (Rozin and Fallon 1987). The authors suggest three possible motivations for rejection. Firstly, sensory affective (the belief that the object has negative sensory properties—usually a bad taste or a bad odor); secondly the anticipation of harm following ingestion (bodily harm or social harm, perhaps relating to status); and thirdly, rejection based on the basis of ideational motives (knowledge regarding the nature or the origin of the food). These motivations could provide a useful framework for this research (Rozin and Fallon 1987:24).

Suitable context

It is an adult focus that constructs a reality whereby products and brands are evaluated in a suitable context for children. Child-specific merchandise is organized in such a way that an acceptable ownership of goods is managed. Children's products and brands can therefore be seen as signifiers, representative of adult culture, yet organized in such a way that is seen as suitable or perhaps tasteful for childhood culture. Products and brands are recruited in the light of a 'suitable pedagogy' (Woodhead 1997). Adults act as gatekeepers, with the status of adulthood signaling authority and controlling access to many products (and their entry into the home). What is seen as fit, or unfit for the ears, eyes and minds of children stems from an adult culture, and yet this is open to evaluation and scrutiny from children, and the childhood culture in which they dwell. At times there will be a clash of cultures, and aspects of power and resistance will be reorganized to find a middle ground of acceptable or unacceptable tastes (Foucault 1977; Wilk 1995; Wouters 1986).

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study aimed to explore children's positive and negative experiences of food and the influences on these interpretations. A rural village school in Yorkshire, United Kingdom, was chosen as a suitable location to investigate the overall research concerns. The village has witnessed steady development since the closure of mines in the 1980's and features high rates of geographical mobility yet with a prominent presence of long-term traditional dwellers. The development of this community has resulted in an array of

social actors from varying backgrounds and their children attend the village school.

The research reported here represents one aspect of a larger study. Eight children aged between 5 and 10 were given single-use cameras over a two-week vacation period. They were asked to take photographs of items that they liked and disliked. The children were given an open brief and took photographs of a wide-ranging subject matter, including toys, clothing, houses, scenery, family members and flowers. For the purposes of this paper we focus on food items, which provided a popular choice of subject matter.

Photography has been used in a number of studies and provides a means to provoke an emotional and expressive response (e.g. Belk et al 1982; Morrow 1998; Schratz and Steiner-Loffler 1998). Photographs can help to locate items in time and space (Emmison and Smith 2000) and provide images, which the photographer (the children) could then talk about at length. As McCauley (1997:63) says "*all photographs are representations, in that they tell us as much about the photographer, the technology used to produce the image, and their intended uses as they tell us about the events or things they depicted*". Photography has been successfully incorporated into previous studies that focus on children (e.g. Schratz and Steiner-Loffler 1998) and can provide useful visual prompts during the interview process (Morrow 1998).

The analysis of these photographs was also child-centered. Once the films were developed, one of the researchers quickly glanced through them before the interviews. However, to all intents and purposes, when the child who had taken the photographs opened the envelope containing the photographs, no prior analysis had been conducted. The child then spoke freely about why he or she had chosen to take the photographs, placing them on one of two boards, one of which represented those photographs featuring likes, and one featuring those that were disliked. The interviewer used prompts where necessary, but as much as possible the child talked about his or her photographs as independently as possible. Following this stage, the two researchers reviewed the transcript from the interview, looking for meanings in addition to those voiced by the participant. The process was therefore one of self-analysis (by the child), supplemented by the interpretation and the discussion between the researchers.

As with all research focusing on children, it was important that ethical guidelines were observed. We received written permission from the parents of all the children participating in the study. Participation was voluntary and was in full knowledge of the teachers and the head teacher of the school. The children who participated in the research were not offered any reward for their participation; they were allowed to withdraw at any time from the study; and could withdraw photographs from the study if they wanted to do so.

Findings

The use of photography provided a successful means by which to involve the children in a task, providing insight into their lives, their likes and their dislikes. The children were given a free rein to take photographs of anything they wanted, although the initial invitation gave the suggestions of food, shoes, clothes, places, shops, packets, bags, drinks, smells, trainers, toys, pictures and sweets. Children took photographs of a wide variety of subjects, with a mixed amount of success! However, it is worth noting how seriously the children took the task. They seemed to have carefully considered how to use their limited (i.e. 24 exposures) opportunity to convey their tastes in as much detail as possible.

For the purposes of this paper, we will focus on just one category of photographs, the most popular subject matter, food. A number of emergent themes (Miles and Huberman 1994) will be

TABLE 1
Children's tastes and distastes in food

Group/category	No. items mentioned	No. items positive	No. items negative
Rice/pasta/bread/' healthy' cereals	5	1	4
Snack foods	9	6	3
Fresh meat / fish	7	4	3
Fruit and vegetables	22	3	19
Dairy products	6	2	4
Processed / tinned foods	4	2	2
Chocolate / sweets	10	9	1
Home cooking	4	4	
Sauces / accompaniments	4		4
Totals	71	31	40

discussed, with the aim of reaching a greater understanding of children's reasons for disliking certain food products and liking others. These themes are natural vs. processed / healthy vs. unhealthy, adult foods vs. child foods, oral taste vs. other senses and symbolic associations and experiences.

One of the important characteristics of food and drink is the way in which it physically becomes part of the self. This provides an important distinction from some of the other subjects featured in the photographs (such as clothing and toys), although some links could be made between physical tastes (foods) and smells, with some objects featured in photographs because of the offensive smell associated with them (e.g. rubbish bins and dog faeces).

As can be seen by Table 1, food was more likely to feature in children's photographs as disliked items. However, overall the photographs depicted approximately equal numbers of positive and negative photographs. This suggested that during the photography exercise children looked to food products when considering items they disliked, or it could be that they found disliked food products more easily available (i.e. in the home).

The categories of foods selected are informative, providing us with a sense of the types of foods that were liked and disliked by these children. From these categories and the detailed responses of the children, we drew upon a number of themes, which helped to make more explicit the reasoning behind the selections. Although the photographs are not included within this paper they will form an important part of the presentation.

Natural vs. Packaged /Processed–Healthy vs. unhealthy

The distinction between natural foods and packaged/processed foods was immediately clear. In general, natural foods seemed more susceptible to negative interpretation by the children than those that were packaged and manufactured. The distinction between packaged and processed foods tended to coincide with those that could be interpreted as healthy or unhealthy, with children often rejecting or demonstrating distaste towards foods that were widely considered to be 'good for you'.

Products commonly regarded as important staples in the British diet such as rice, pasta and bread were not often included by the children in their photographs, perhaps because many children

regarded them in neither a positive or a negative light. It is likely these were items that were just accepted as part of a 'normal' diet, rather than inspiring particularly positive or negative feelings. However, there were a few children who voiced their dislikes of such products:

Kate (age 7): "Rice, I don't like any kind of rice..."

Health organizations frequently warn about the dangers of a high salt, high fat, high sugar diet, yet many of the photographs featuring children's tastes focused on products widely considered to be unhealthy. In contrast, the disliked photographs featured a number of foods, which are considered to offer more nutritional value to the children. Children seemed to favor those foods that were either sweet or featured a high fat content. In fact the 'snacks' category and the 'sweets and chocolate' category stood out as ones in which children included more positive than negative images.

The photographs provided an indication of the success of company marketing strategies, with the children selecting products that were clearly targeted towards them (providing links with the themes of adults' vs. children's foods). Tinned foods did not feature very often in the children's photographs, but it is perhaps worth noting that the two tinned items interpreted positively (out of the 4 photographed) were both baked beans with sausages, items that are primarily associated with children.

Kate (age 7): "Baked beans and sausages, they're nice"

Perhaps predictably, the children's photographs featured a large variety of sweets and chocolates. The number of sweet items photographed could be partly attributable to the time of year, which coincided with the children's Easter break from school. The festivities may have increased the children's access to chocolates and 'treat' products, and three of the eight children included photographs of Easter eggs. In general sweets and chocolates were interpreted positively by the children, in fact there was only one product in this category which was included because it was disliked, and this was the 'Manchester Tart' which is a traditional British cake, primarily popular with (older) adults.

The children often found it difficult to express why they liked or didn't like particular food items. The vocabulary and ability to describe the subtleties of oral taste is perhaps too advanced for many of these children. Likes would often be expressed with the use of sounds, such as "Ooooh..." [e.g. Easter eggs]. One of the girls in the study attempted to describe her dislike for onions. She found it quite straightforward to describe the physical reaction that they produced (i.e. the tears) but she found it very difficult to explain what it was about their actual taste that she did not welcome, initially attributing her dislike to their 'sweet' taste.

Kate (age 7): "they make me cry and they are too sweet, too much sugar in, I do like to eat things but nothing too sweet"

Researcher: "Can you think of a reason why you don't like the tastes?"

Kate: "They taste like they have got this... They taste to me as if they have this little thingy in which makes them taste horrible but I don't know what it is... that makes me feel sick..."

This in itself demonstrates the difficulties of exploring tastes and distastes with children. Although children may have clearly defined likes and dislikes, it is difficult to ascertain where these views stem from. In the following interchange, the language used by the participant would seem to reflect a consideration for the social meanings associated with food—because of the use of the word 'cool'—but it seems more likely that the word 'cool' was selected as a 'catch all' term, because of the difficulties associated with describing specific tastes.

Isla (age 7) "These are crisps I don't like, they're plain"

Researcher "Do you like other crisps?"

Isla "Yes, but I don't think these crisps are cool"

In addition many participants found it difficult to pinpoint what they liked about foods.

Lucy (age 9) "Look, I like tuna twist and I like roast potatoes"

Researcher "Do you, why?..."

Lucy "They feel nice in my tummy"

Adult foods vs. child foods

Findings from a previous study indicated that children are very aware of the importance of consuming those products and clothing, which are deemed 'appropriate' for their age (see Banister and Booth 2003), a concern that was also noted with the young adult participants in another study (Banister and Hogg 2001). This same kind of anxiety was noted here, although to a lesser extent. Many of the food products featured are clearly those which the children's parents favor, and which the children found more difficult to understand. Examples of such products were items such as coffee, sauces and meal accompaniments (e.g. pickles, salad cream).

The children were also at an age when certain products might be considered distasteful because of their association with a younger age group. For example one of the participants described baby food as 'sloppy'. Yet other products remained liked, precisely because they could be associated with the participant at a younger age (nostalgia).

Isla (age 7): "I like strawberries... I learned them when I was a baby"

The research also allowed the opportunity to consider how the children interpreted those products that were directly targeted at them. Some of these featured as liked products.

Peter (age 5): "These are my little brother's [Easter eggs]... I like Bob the Builder"

Researcher: "Why do you like it?"

Peter "Yes, I've got Pilchard he is a character, he's a cat on Bob the Builder"

Ironically, aspects of marketing that might be assumed to ingratiate products to children could sometimes have the reverse effect.

Peter (age 5) "...I don't like Sugar Puffs because the honey monster is on the video [advertisement]"

Symbolic associations and experiences

Like many consumption experiences, food products were not without symbolic meanings. Associations and previous experiences were frequently evoked by the photographs and provided explanations regarding why the food item was liked or disliked, suggesting links with Rozin and Fallon (1987).

Kate (age 7): "I don't like curry... It reminds me of being sick and it makes me feel sick"

Researcher: "Can you remember the first time it made you feel sick?"

Kate "It made me sick and daddy shouts at me and he still gives it me and he says if I don't eat it I can't have anything else and I don't like it"

Researcher "Is that why you don't like things because it reminds you?"

Kate "Of being told off"

Two types of (negative) associations were made here. Firstly the curry was found distasteful because it had made the child sick, and secondly it reminded her of another unpleasant experience—being told off by her father—which made her rejection all the more concrete. There were actually a number of instances where the children made reference to foods that had made them feel sick in the past, and by association the items remained offensive to them.

Isaac (age 8) "...when I used to like strawberries my daddy bought some and then I ate all of them and then I felt sick"

One of the participants considered mint flavors—even in foods that he generally liked, such as chocolate or ice cream—to be negative because it reminded him of toothpaste, or more specifically, cleaning his teeth, an activity he did not enjoy.

Isaac (age 8) "I bet you're wondering what this [ice cream and chocolate] is... it is mint, but you have got to put this on the bad board... It's my toothbrush, I hate brushing my teeth. I think it is a waste of time"

Another reoccurring theme was the way in which the appearance of food could be altered and made less appealing, much like Rozin and Fallon's (1987) allusion to personal contamination in food. A number of participants described how others (generally siblings) would change the appearance of food, and how this affected their perceptions of products.

Kate (age 7) "I don't like Weetabix it makes me sick. My brother makes it horrible in his mouth..."

Lucy (age 9) "I don't like the taste and feel [of bananas]... my sister does horrible things with them in her mouth...she does it with pasta too...and cheesy Wotsits...."

Throughout this study, the children made reference to items that were associated with their home life. Sometimes photographs (both positive and negative) depicted family members (especially siblings) or pictures of the home and garden. At other times the associations were less direct. Home-cooked meals fitted in with this less direct association in the sense that it reminded children of family meals—time spent together as a family. In every case that home cooking was featured in the photographs (by 4 different participants) these photographs represented positive images for the children.

Kate (age 7) "I like this macaroni cheese with tomato ketchup, my mummy does this"

'Taste' vs. other senses

It was interesting to recognize that although food is primarily associated with the sense of taste, other senses were important in the way in which the participants interpreted the food. A number of photographs were taken of things that were interpreted as dirty or smelly (e.g. dirty plates). Eggs were mentioned by a couple of the participants as foods that would be rejected because of their smell. Certain foods were consistently featured in a negative light; examples were rotten fruit and bananas, which were seen by many to be particularly disgusting. In fact the way in which certain foods changed from being inviting and positively viewed products, to ones that were viewed negatively, could explain some of the strongly held dislikes for fruits and vegetables.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The method used in this study was particularly successful in encouraging children to talk about their own experiences of consumption, and can be considered a child-centered methodology. However, it was often difficult for children to verbalize their thinking behind the photographs. This partly reflected the age of the children. Between the ages of 5 and 10 children's vocabulary is perhaps not sufficiently developed to fully elaborate something as complicated as taste—something that many adults choose to be educated to achieve, as is the case with wine tasting.

However, the photographs were very effective in exploring the associations that children made with certain foods and how these affected their interpretation of these foods. Throughout the photography exercise, children talked enthusiastically about their day-to-day likes and dislikes, and food was an interesting category on which to focus, because of its everyday nature. Through exploring children's attitudes to different foods, we learnt a great deal about children's relationships with others, the influence of age, marketing and experience on children's interpretation of products and the world around them.

The findings provided support for the work of Rozin and Fallon (1987) who identified four types of rejection (distaste, danger, inappropriateness and disgust) in relation to food. In the context of this study, distaste was the most difficult source of rejection for the children to articulate, much more so than when their dislikes reflected previous experiences, or rejection on ideological grounds (e.g. adult foods or 'not cool' or for babies). Some

of the foods could be interpreted by children as representing danger in the sense of reliving past experience—for example eating food that had made them sick in the past (even if they had originally liked that food). The photographs provided the ideal means for children to identify the properties that they found offensive or disgusting about certain foods, sometimes linking food consumption with past experiences (being sick) or the future appearance of the food (e.g. rotting fruit). The children frequently used facial expressions to illustrate their arguments, screwing up their face to illustrate their distastes or disgust for certain products, which again suggests that visual methodologies were an appropriate method for this study, rather than relying on the ability of children to articulate their preferences.

LIMITATIONS

The study was not without its limitations. There were many benefits associated with using a method that encouraged enjoyment and creativity by the children. However, the data collection relied on the fact that children would be able to use the cameras, and some photographs were rendered useless for the study. In addition as images have several sites of meaning construction, someone else may have been provided with different photographs or with a different explanation for their inclusion. At times the children's explanation of why they had decided to take certain photographs was incomplete and difficult to follow, but this is a difficulty associated with all research that focuses on children. In essence this study was exploratory in nature, seeking to inform and generate interest rather than lead to conclusive results.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should explore how children's tastes develop. Particularly with food products it would be interesting to chart how foods normally associated with mature tastes gradually become acceptable to children, and explore how different parenting attitudes (to children's food consumption) might affect the development of tastes (and distastes). It was interesting to note how fresh and natural foods seemed more susceptible to distastes. It is suggested that it is not always the taste of a natural product that puts children off, but the way in which the product changes with time. Bananas, although featured by one child as a liked product, were more often featured as disliked products, because of the way in which the consistency of the fruit changes when it turns from ripe to over ripe and past its best. In the interests of public policy and the promotion of sufficient fruit and vegetable intake by children, this observation needs to be studied more clearly. It would also be useful to expand the research focus to include a greater number of children from a variety of backgrounds, as this would expand the number of discoveries and conceptualization.

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An Exploration of Social Influence on Dyadic Giving

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Most gift-giving research focuses on aspects of the giver, recipient, or their relationship, although Sherry (1983) has argued that charting gift-giving behavior over time and “as one’s social network expands and contracts” (p. 158) would illuminate the ways gifts capture the nature of social relationships. Our interpretation of the Christmas giving behavior of five informants over 12 years demonstrates how over time, givers are influenced by third parties when selecting gifts for recipients. Thus, seemingly personal, dyadic gifts perform important relational work in the social network.

Our taxonomy of 10 social influences stemmed from an exploration of these questions:

1. How do third parties in a giver’s social network influence dyadic giving?
2. What are the underlying relational processes of these social influences?

Method

We interviewed and accompanied five givers on shopping trips during four Christmas seasons from 1990 to 1997. For further details, see Lowrey, Otnes, and Ruth (2004). We began our analysis by systematically coding the text to classify and compare changes in giver/recipient relationships and other key dimensions of gift giving. While assessing the relational roles of the giver and recipient among the 70 dyads examined (five givers and their many recipients), as well as changes in their lives, we noticed how our informants adapted their giving to particular recipients in response to others in their social networks. Thus, we recoded the data to identify these social influences. Because our analysis revealed the salience of social influences, we conducted final interviews in 2001, asking informants to assess the validity of these influences. Our interpretation is centered on the five underlying relational processes associated with the 10 social influences.

Findings

The relational process underlying the first two social influences, calibrating and practicing equipollence, is that of making social comparisons. When calibrating, givers engage in social comparison across the network, categorize recipients as different from one another, and adjust their giving accordingly to symbolically express their standing vis-à-vis others. When practicing equipollence, givers signal that they regard certain recipients as similar in closeness or relational status to one another.

The next two social influences are reenacting third-party traditions and relinquishing traditions, which share the underlying relational process of adjusting to disrupted traditions. In the first, givers find themselves reenacting traditions originally created and maintained by now-absent third parties (normally family members who have died). In the second, givers may find themselves allowing a powerful third party to usurp a tradition the giver had previously enjoyed with a particular recipient.

Accessing social support underlies the two social influences of enrolling accomplices and using surrogates. Social support is emotional or instrumental assistance provided by third parties. When enrolling accomplices, givers use third parties to help accom-

plish gift tasks, but may also seek to bond with the third party through joint activities and shared tasks. In contrast, givers use third parties as surrogates when the gift-giving situation is associated with risk in some way (e.g., giving a gag gift that may be misinterpreted).

Gaining permission from gatekeepers and adhering to group norms are two social influences stemming from the desire to act within relational rules. When gaining permission, givers ask third parties (often parents) to approve of a gift item for a particular recipient (often children) in order to avoid damaging the relationship with the gatekeeper. Adhering to group norms includes setting restrictions on family giving (e.g., gifts for children only) or in workplace settings (e.g., Secret Santa exchanges), and helps to maintain satisfactory social relations among the giver, recipients, and third parties.

Finally, the relational processes of initiating and severing relationships leads to the social influences of integrating and disassociating. Integrating recipients occurs when a person important to the giver (e.g., her father) brings new associates into the giver’s social network (e.g., father’s new girlfriend), who are then new recipients for the giver. With disassociation, when such relationships are severed, ties with these types of recipients are severed as well.

These social influences expand Sherry’s (1983) model and Belk and Coon’s (1993) notion of agapic giving. In Sherry’s reformulation stage, the two basic motives of giving (altruistic and agonistic) are directed toward the recipient. We argue that givers often use gifts in altruistic and agonistic ways to manage relationships with others in the network as well. Similarly, Belk and Coon’s agapic giving is characterized by a sacrifice on the giver’s part and the attempt to singularize recipients. Our findings demonstrate that givers also make sacrifices to and attempt to singularize third parties.

We acknowledge three limitations of our study. First, we emphasize the giver’s perspective. Future studies should examine the perspectives of recipients and third parties within a giver’s social network. Second, our findings are based on interactions with females. Although women are the primary caregivers and maintainers of relationships and rituals in most societies, it would be interesting to investigate how men’s giving might be influenced by third parties. Finally, the context of giving at Christmas may not be the same as other giving occasions, which may produce different patterns of behavior. Nevertheless, we feel that social influence is likely to impact giving, regardless of the context.

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Reconciling Christianity and Modernity: Australian Youth and Religion

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ABSTRACT

The growth of New Christian Movement Churches (such as the Pentecostal movements) in Australia is explored against a backdrop of falling attendance among the more 'traditional' churches (Catholic, Anglican etc). The powerful appeal of these New Christian Movement Churches (NCMs) to young people is studied through a series of interviews with young Australians using a phenomenological approach. The common threads from the enquiry are drawn together and mapped onto Lambert's (1999) secularization of religion model. A 'consequences of modernity' (Giddens 1991) argument is used to understand how these NCMs fulfill the need that these young people feel to reconcile aspects of modernity with their religious beliefs.

INTRODUCTION:

This paper explores the seeming contradiction of the exponential growth of young Australians (15-29) engaging with 'New Christian Movements' (with a particular focus on the Pentecostal churches) and the growing numbers of 'nominal' or 'non-religious' Australians (ABS Census 2001).

This growth in NCMs is clearly visible on City University Campuses in Sydney and other cities in Australia. The Evangelical Union of the University of Sydney for example, claiming to be the largest student union body on campus (Evangelical Union website). The reasons why the youth of Australia are attracted to these New Christian Movements (NCMs) is explored through a series of phenomenological interviews..

The motives articulated by these young people in the interviews are studied for common threads and the reasons are compared to Lambert's (1999) religion and modernity model in an attempt to better understand this 'consumer segment'. This youth segment has been found to be notoriously difficult to reach by traditional churches (Kaldor 1987). This paper also attempts to understand better the primary characteristics of such NCMs and the power of their appeal to the youth segment. The rationalization of these movements and the close resemblance they bear to commercial/marketing bodies is explored in the context of 'outcomes of modernity' (Giddens 1991; Dobbelaere 1981; Dobbelaere and Jagodzinski 1995).

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:

Young University students abandoning Mambo and Billabong for black t shirts with 'Absolut God' emblazoned on them were a common sight in Spring of 2002 on a major Sydney University campus. Cheerful young people wearing green and white 'Evangelical Union' T shirts were more visible than college (on campus fraternity-like organizations) colours during orientation week. University students who spend Saturday nights not in the local pub or nightclub, but crowding onto buses to attend a church in the suburbs is becoming a commonplace sight. Australian University Youth are spending a lot more time in church and church related activities than ever before (Sydney Morning Herald: Good weekend magazine).

Religion and young people are often viewed as an unlikely combination. The National Church Life Survey (NCLS) in Australia which conducts surveys every five years across most major Christian denominations provides a snapshot of church demographics in Australia. Their latest study (2001), has documented the

common under-representation of young people in church (only 14% church goers are between 15-29 year olds). Kaldor (1987) noted that since the 1960s, it has been observed that young adults in Australia are less likely to be church attenders than those who are older and this gap appear to be widening as years go by. Age profile of church goers by majority, are in the 40-49 year olds (18%), 50-59 year olds (18%), 60-69 year olds (17%), and those in the 70+ age group (21%). Some denominations appear to be more appealing to young people than others. In the 15-29 year old group, some 30% attend Pentecostal denominations, 23% the Baptist church, and 22% the Churches of Christ. This is a stark comparison to the 12% who attend the Catholic Church, 11% the Anglican Church, and 8% the Uniting church (2001 National Church Life Survey)

As highlighted by Horsfield (in Ballis & Bouma, 1999), the youth segment is a particularly difficult to attract segment among all denominations most churches have difficulties attracting and keeping youth within their ministries.

However the NCLS (2001) data clearly show that some types of churches (depending on the denomination) seem to be able to target and position themselves and their ideologies better than the more traditional churches. Are these differences in response to people's changing spiritual tastes and needs or part of a fundamental shift in religious ideology?

As revealed by the latest national census in 2001, the two major denominations in Australia are Anglican and Catholic, which accounted for 46.5% of the population. Interestingly, the 'no religion' group has increased from 0.4% in 1901 to almost 17% by 1996, and around 25% in 2001. 'No religion' also implied people who chose not to answer the question as this is a voluntary question in the census.

Several reasons can be attributed to this downward trend. The influx of migrants from South-east Asia and the Middle East has seen the growth of Buddhism, Islam, and other religions in Australia. People also seem to be moving away from 'traditional' religion into New Age beliefs and values. Ireland (1999) noted a noticeable increase in Australia in new religious movements which offers alternative spiritual practices such as horoscopes, astrology, clairvoyants, psychic healing using crystals, and Eastern meditation.

While religion diversity begins to make a presence in Australia as well as the increase in the 'no religion' group, the proportion of people identifying themselves to a Christian denomination has decreased except for the Catholics, the Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witness. Of all Christian denominations in 1991, the most rapidly growing one are the Pentecostals. This trend is reflected worldwide as well. Brierley (1998) argues that Pentecostalism is a 20th century religious phenomenon whose rapid growth into the 21st century is unprecedented of any Christian denomination worldwide. It only represented 1% of the world's Christian population in 1960, but will have grown to 8% by 2010.

As traditional denominations experience a decline in Australia, contemporary churches which are Pentecostal or charismatic in nature are thriving. Between the 1996 and 2001 census, The number of Pentecostals were up by 10%, double that of the Anglicans or Catholic (ABS figures cited in Quinlivan, 2002).

THE NEW CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT CHURCHES

An example of these New Christian Movement (NCMs) churches is the Hillsong Church in Sydney which attracts over

10,000 people in its 6 weekend services with an annual growth rate of 40%. The church engages in multiple business ventures. It has wide tele-evangelical services as well as a thriving music business. Unusually an album (Blessed) produced, written, and recorded by the Hillsong church was hit no. 4 at the ARIA (Australian Record Industry Association) charts in July 2002 outranking the likes of Shakira, Kylie Minogue, and Ronan Keating. A gospel album to be ranked with the likes of Eminem which was the no. 1 album at that time says a great deal about the popularity of such music among Australian youth.

The Hillsong church appears to overturn all traditional perceptions of a church. The church building is more corporate centre than cathedral. The services are usually shorter, featuring live 'praise and worship' (which often can be mistaken for a music concert!) with plenty of 'performance' elements. The pastor can be mistaken for a motivational speaker or talk show host (as one member of the church described it "going in there and seeing this man in a purple suit instead of a dog collar working the crowds.. it blew me away!"). The style belongs more in the American South than urban Sydney, with faith healing, speaking in tongues and dramatic baptisms, but with a very 'trendy' modern theme to it. These churches have slick websites, some offering 'online shopping' of their books, CDs, and other Christian resources.

Many of these churches have built websites which range from simple informational brochure sites (usually only giving basic information such as the location of the church, service times, etc) to more sophisticated content sites offering extensive information, resources, online shopping, sermon audio downloads in MP3 format, and email subscriptions for regular newsletters (for example, Kenneth Copeland Ministries at www.kcm.org).

The congregation of NCM churches mainly consists of people under 50 (73%), of these 30% are in the 15-29 age group and 43% in the 30-49 age group. This differs greatly in comparison with traditional (such as Catholic, Anglican, and Uniting) churches where only 8-12% of its congregations fall in the 15-29 age groups. These NCM churches also have thriving youth ministries, and often run specific programs and conferences (for example, www.planetshakers.com.au, www.youthalive.org.au) targeted towards the youth. These churches also seem to have revolutionized the Gospel music genre by developing contemporary style praise and worship sung by groups such as Delirious, who look like any modern rock band.

These churches have many of the features of the 'Seeker' movement in the United States where the philosophy is "Just as in the marketplace, you think of products and services that people need and how you create that; to some extent we're looking at and recognizing spiritual needs that people have" (Richard Anderson of the Willow Creek Ministries, South Barrington, Illinois in Buss and Dale 2002)

METHOD:

These New Christian Movements (NCMs) have been especially remarkable in their ability to attract and retain the youth segment or 'future consumers'. This aspect of targeting and attracting youth bears closer examination.

This exploratory study attempts to understand some of the reasons why such churches attract these young people while traditional congregations appear to be losing younger members. A phenomenological approach to understanding the religious/spiritual consumption experience of these young people was taken. A setting aside of assumptions and researchers own understanding (and biases) of the phenomenon was consciously adopted. The research purpose was seen as trying to understand the subject's 'lived experience' (Goulding 1992). The recognition of the

respondent's reality of the consumption experience was allowed to lead the interpretation and analyses. Frameworks and structures of interpretation were therefore those suggested by the shape and tone of the interviews themselves.

THE RESPONDENTS:

These were chosen on a selective basis, picking subjects who have been through the particular consumption experience (affiliation with a New Christian Movement Church).

Five young people between the ages of 17-22 were recruited, comprising two males and three female respondents. They were all Sydney residents. One was in high school and one had been in the workforce for about a year; the other three were all at University. All of them could be described as high achievers (judged by the University/school and degree courses attended or the type of job held).

The interviews were carried out on campus of a major university in Sydney, Australia except in the case of the two who were not currently University students. The interviews ranged in time from 40 minutes to more than 2 hours in one case and were all audio-taped and later transcribed verbatim. Three of the interviewees belonged to or were affiliated to a single Pentecostal Church in Sydney. The interviews once transcribed were analysed for 'common threads' by identifying key 'cue phrases' were found.

These were related to or mapped onto the 'religion and modernity' model suggested by Lambert (1999) to see if these instances of religious affiliation represented the rise of rationalized and commercialized 'modern' manifestations of religious commitment.

COMMON THREADS:

In each interview six common threads were identified. These can be described as follows:

1. *I consciously chose my church:* This took various forms. All interviewees were nominally Christian (born or socialized in the first few years of life into families that were practicing but not intensely Christian), but not committed Christians before they 'chose' their current church. The element of freedom to choose and having compared churches was clearly articulated by all the respondents. R(M21) for instance described this phase in his search as follows "I went shopping around for a belief; I looked at Islam and Buddhism, but Christianity was what did it, not that it has not increased my respect for other religions.."
2. *My relationship with God:* This was a personal thing—not necessarily mediated by the church, but facilitating it. The term 'relationship' appeared to be key with three of the interviewees repeating the phrase. R(M21) described it as 'its not a social thing- many people see church as a way of socializing, For me its about knowing God, God got in touch, it was a personal connection..". J (F 22) describes it as "Makes me understand the big picture through having a relationship with God" S (M 17) said "the church is a friend". JA (F 22) went further "it's a relationship at Hills (church)" "for me its not a compromise (referring to giving up Saturday nights drinking with friends at night-clubs), its what I want to do, its about being passionately in love with the church, its been 6 years now and my spiritual needs are met and continuously being met, it keeps taking me to the next level". "It's a personal relationship with God".

3. *My spirituality not Religion*: This was quite a strongly held view amongst the respondents. JA (F 22) says “I was religious, but this is so different from the Anglican (church) its more relevant, the message was about real life, not about solemn singing in church”. R (M21) says “Religion–(corrects himself) spirituality is something people use as an alternative to religion.”
1. *My family and my beliefs*: All the interviewees had concerns about the way their parents viewed their involvement with the church or religious organization. J (J 22) said “They (parents) were a bit cautious with my involvement in the EU (Evangelical Union), thought it’s a cult that’s taking over my whole life, after my cousins explained what it was they didn’t mind”. S (M17) says “They support me, my sister is getting more Christian, but my parents don’t go”. JA (F22) sees more resistance “My parents are wary of it K (sister) loves it, I am trying to get them to go, mum does sometimes but not dad. For themselves that’s not what they want- its no problem for them I attend”. R (M 21) feels saddened by it “they (family react) differently my mother is indifferent, the opposite of love is indifference not hate. She does not care, she is never curious about it (my faith). Its not just happiness, she is indifferent because I am happy in it- its about my relationship with my mother really”
5. *My church is successful and that is not necessarily a bad thing*: This was particularly true of the three respondents who had affiliations with the Pentecostal church. Each of them felt obliged to explain the money raising aspect of the church’s activities. One respondent (I21) described it as ‘anyway money I would have spent at a nightclub drinking with friends’ and that she was getting a lot more out of this and the music and dancing were very much a part of it and the atmosphere of a ‘nightclub without alcohol’ and where there were no concerns about other people’s motives in being friendly. The church was about being ‘relevant’ to young people. The church organized skateboard contests and had games to attract the young teens on a Friday night, while the young 20s crowd were pleased by the nightclub atmosphere and social aspects of the later evening gathering. Many members entered into business ventures with co-members and the church- the philosophy being one of “give and it shall be returned to you tenfold” (Meares 2003)
6. *My belief is rational*: This aspect was particularly highlighted for the sample (four of these respondents were in a leading Australian University in courses that required a 93% or more school leaving score-putting them in the top 10% academic achievement group in their cohort). One of these respondents addressed this issue with a Cartesian logic–(God created man with reason so that this reason (as manifest in a religion cleansed by reason) would lead him back to God). R(M 21) articulated this as “My friends question it, but philosophy can reconcile the (divergent) aspects of religion and science”. The Evangelical union on the campus of a major Australian University staged a debate between leading academics on the reason versus religion question this series called ‘Absolut God’ tapping into the cult status associations that Absolut vodka has among this target segment of urban youth.

MODERNITY AND RELIGION:

Lambert (1999) identified, using the arguments of many religious scholars (Nakamura 1986; Melton 1998; Bellah 1976; Tschannen 1992; Hervieu-Leger 1986; Champion 1993, Kurtz 1995) and many religious movements (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Christianity etc) some overlapping characteristics from newer forms of religious movements. He identifies the following as common characteristics among such new and changing movements as shaped by the forces of modernity.

1. *This worldliness*: This indicates the movement of focus from the ‘next world/reincarnation’ to this world and man as the focus with a stress on ‘human love’, including the increasing value placed on the human body, moving away from asceticism (at the expense of fear and damnation). As Kitagawa (1967) says “ all classical religions tended to take negative attitudes toward phenomenal existence and recognized another realm of reality” (p.62). This is exactly that which has been overturned and as Lambert suggests instead that all religions are compelled to “find the meaning of human destiny in this world–in culture, society and human personality”. This focus on the material, present world was repeated in many forms among the respondents: The description of the churches business ventures often took this form, the sale of CDs in the church foyer before and after the service was seen as acceptable The images of Jesus clearing the temple of commerce or the worshipping of the golden calf that the traditional churches point to as anti-materialistic teaching are not focused on in these NCMs. The Chief Pastor in a leading NCM church in Sydney is quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald’s Good Weekend Magazine (25th January 2003) as saying “If you believe in Jesus, he will reward you here on earth as well as in Heaven” and “ anyone who puts the Kingdom of Heaven first (rich or poor) can expect Bible Economics to work in their life now!”. The argument is that the money they (the churches) make comes from the promotion of Christian material and not worldly goods. In some cases it helped these churches seem more ‘relevant’-“they need to make a living” or “being successful is not a bad thing” and the quote of ‘give and it shall be returned to you tenfold’ offered as a sort of ‘fidelity in return for prosperity’ pledge, which was very much at odds with the traditional Christian churches stand on materialism.
2. *The spirituality within*: This is largely related to the idea of ‘individualization’ that is expressed by Bellah (1976) “ Each individual must work out his own ultimate solutions, and the most the church can do is provide him a favourable environment for doing so, without imposing on him a prefabricated set of answers”(p309). Thomas Paine’s “my mind is my church” symbolizes this most clearly. Among our respondents this is articulated by R (M21) when he says that ‘spirituality is something people use as an alternative to religion’. This respondent’s reconciling of the reason vs religion (specifically the Creationism vs Evolution debate) reveals this need to have worked out the detail and having satisfied that philosophy can indeed reconcile these two issues ‘he grappled with’ in his mind convinced him of its validity.
3. *Informality*: Bellah (1976) points to this reduced distance between the faithful and God and between the faithful and

the church. Dobbelaere (1991) refers to this as a dehierarchization—the bringing closer of the human and the Divine. Lambert (1999) refers to the French Catholic Church allowing the use of the ‘tu’ form when addressing God in prayer rather than the formal ‘vous’. This is illustrated both by J (F22) “It helps me understand the big picture through having a relationship with God”. JA (F22) speaks of “being passionately in love with the church.” and R (M21) speaks of God having got in touch, and it being a personal connection. The descriptions use language that is significant- these are words these young people would use to describe relationships with other people their age. This is a God and Church that is young, contemporary and relevant to them.

4. *Freedom to choose*: Roof (1993, 1995) in his study of 1400 Americans found that 76% of them chose “going to church /synagogue is something you do if it meets your needs” not “it is a duty and an obligation”. Two thirds of this group were ‘born again/ pentecostal’ Christians. The seeker church philosophy referred to earlier uses this idea to great advantage in their ‘market oriented approach’ to growing their ministries. Among the respondents of this enquiry, each of them articulated the idea of choice- none of them are presently affiliated with the church they nominally belonged to (born into, parents belonged to). There was a conscious decision about their original churches ‘not satisfying needs’ JA (F22) explained this as ‘the Anglican church was so Anglo-Saxon- everybody knew each other and anyone new got looked at; it was hard to break into; (not for me, for newcomers) not very comfortable (for newcomers); here (church of choice) you slip in and become part of it’. R (M21) ‘I shopped around for a belief..Islam, Buddhism...but this was it’ showed a certainty about the choice, and the exercise of conscious choice.
5. *Ritualism and Symbolism Transformed*: This refers to some of the earlier discussion of bringing the human and the Divine closer. Much of the ritual and symbolism of religion is intrinsically tied up with this need to demystify. However in many cases the shift has been from mystery to performance. The theatricality of faith healing, speaking in tongues or of public baptisms in a swimming pool suspended above a 3500 strong crowd creates a dramatic element of performance. Other rituals are more mundane and involve the focus on human interaction. Social interaction is a function the church has served for centuries, the rituals are transformed, but still have the same purposes. The Friday evening meetings now simulate the nightclub without alcohol instead of a community meeting place it was in the past.

The opinion of Giddens (1991) that “rather than entering a period of post-modernism, we are moving into one in which the consequences of modernity are becoming more radicalized and universalized than before” appears to hold for the Christian religious movement in Australia. While post modernism has entered other social movements in Australia, one could argue that the NCMs do not display the hallmarks of post-modernity such as the ‘disqualification’ of the great narratives. There is rather a reverting to an adapted, rationalized and transformed narrative of Christianity that is more compatible with the modernist’s ideology of endless

progression rather than a postmodern tearing down of old mythologies and narratives. In some instances it is marked by the return to some aspects of religious fundamentalism such as a conservative attitude to the homosexuality and abortion (Meares 2003). In many ways this may be seen as no more than an echo of the rise of the Pentecostal brand of Christianity in other parts of the world. In fact going by global figures, Australia lags far behind that of North and South America (Brierley 1998) in the growth of the Charismatic or Pentecostal church. Many of the NCM churches in Australia are linked to the ‘Assembly of God’ governing body which is based in the USA. These may explain some of the common features of philosophy and worship that appear in both the North American and Australian NCMs.

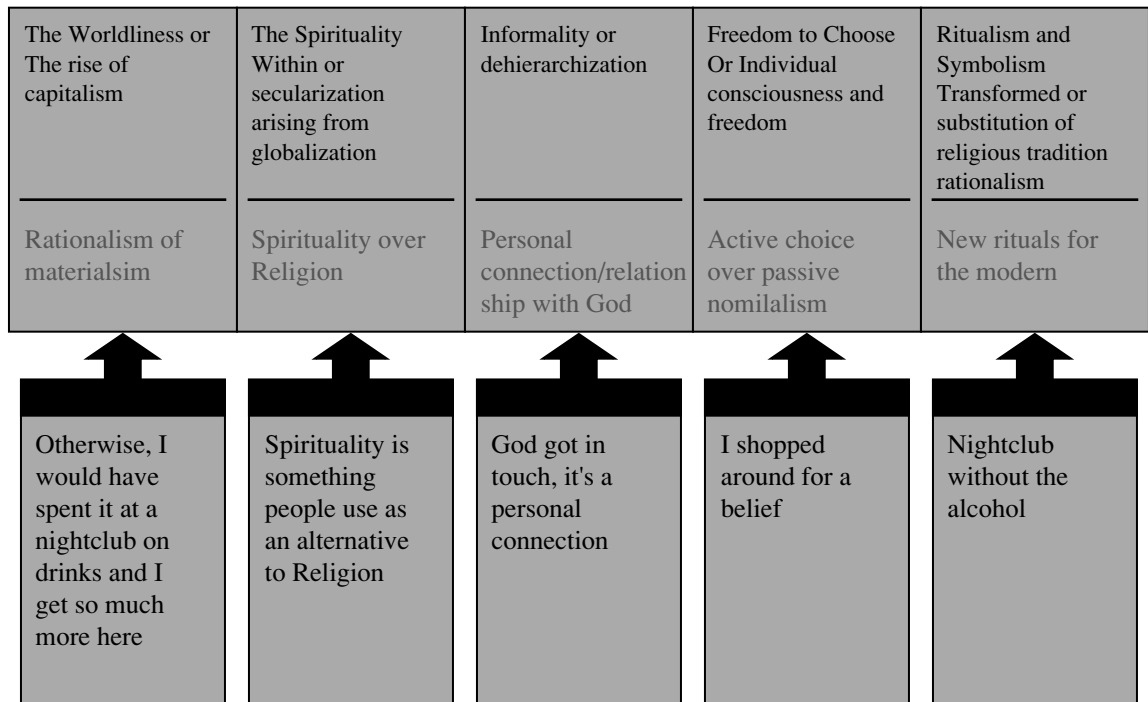
Insights

The one dominant theme that runs through all the interviews is the idea that these churches (NCMs) were helping meet their (young Australians’) need to reconcile or in some way bring the traditional Christian faith they were socialized in and their contemporary lives together. This reconciliation of modernity and Christian teaching, achieved through some broad reinterpretations of the ‘old’ church teachings and with an overlay of social accessibility and an element of ‘entertainment’ has put the NCMs in the position of seeing their young ministries grow in ways the traditional churches have not. The NCMs in Australia are no longer being dismissed as irrelevant to the spiritual and material needs of young people as they may have been in the past (by their parents’ generation) (Brierley 1998), there are significant numbers of young people being attracted to these churches. It is unclear however how many of these people will stay with the church in the long term. Some of them are positioned primarily as ‘young churches and therefore may lose current members as they grow older and move away. This is particularly true for the sample looked at. University education over, these young people will move as careers take them elsewhere. Thus retention rates may be as much of a problem as with traditional churches. It may even appear to be a ‘positioning’ and ‘segmenting’ strategy at work here. Young people being attracted to the NCMs early in life but who may in different stages of their life, move onto traditional churches or drop out of church and become nominal or non-attending members of churches.

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FIGURE 1
Modernity and Religion Reconciled



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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Drivers of Hedonic Choice

J. Jeffrey Inman, University of Pittsburgh

SESSION OVERVIEW

Utilitarian goods are characterized by high functionality or practicality, while hedonic goods are characterized by their experiential aspects. (e.g., Batra and Ahtola 1991; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). The advent of scanner data launched considerable research examining the drivers of choice of utilitarian products (e.g., Guadagni and Little 1982), but researchers have only recently begun to explore the factors that influence the choice of hedonic goods. For example, Shiv and Fedorikhin (1999) showed that under conditions of low cognitive resource availability, affect tended to dominate choice (leading to the choice of a hedonic item), but the reverse occurred under conditions of high resources. Further, Werthenbroch (1998) finds that consumers utilize self-regulatory strategies (e.g., self-rationing) to maintain self control over their consumption of hedonic (vice) goods, while Kivetz and Simonson (2002) argue that individuals are more likely to feel guilty after selecting hedonic items over utilitarian items. Finally, detailed consumption data for hedonic goods are becoming available, offering research opportunities similar to that of scanner data.

This session sought to contribute to the increasing interest in understanding hedonic choice processes, bringing together a set of respected researchers in the area. All three papers examined the underpinnings of hedonic choice. The first, co-authored by Baba Shiv (University of Iowa), Rosie Ferraro (Duke University) and Jim Bettman (Duke University), examined the potential interactive effects of body esteem, thoughts of mortality, and gender on choice of a more hedonic good (chocolate cake) versus a more utilitarian good (fruit salad). The second paper, co-authored by Craig Fox (UCLA), Rebecca Ratner (University of North Carolina), and Daniel Lieb (Duke University) explored the dynamics of hedonic choice, building on the work of Simonson (1990) and Ratner, Kahn, and Kahneman (1999). Specifically, they argued that consumers' bias toward diversification can give rise to choices that vary systematically as a function of how the options are subjectively partitioned by the decision maker. The third paper, co-authored by Jaap Boter (Vrije Universiteit), Jeff Inman (University of Pittsburgh), and Michel Wedel (University of Michigan) sought to extend the literature on intertemporal choice (e.g., Ratner, Kahn, and Kahneman 1999; Inman 2001) by modeling the attributes that drive choice of performing arts alternatives (e.g., symphony, opera, Broadway musical) in a panel of over 14 thousand Dutch arts patrons over a three year period.

The session's discussant, Barbara Kahn, noted several strengths of the session. First, the papers complemented one another quite well. The Shiv et al. paper focused on moderators of a discrete choice between a hedonic good and a utilitarian good, Fox et al. moved to the context of choice of a portfolio of hedonic goods, while Boter et al. used panel data to model intertemporal choice among hedonic (entertainment) alternatives over an extended period. Second, the papers triangulated on the phenomena using both experimental (Shiv et al. and Fox et al.) and market data (Boter et al.). The lynchpin binding the papers was their goal of deepening our understanding of the factors that influence hedonic choice.

In sum, this session attempted to bring together three papers on the cutting edge of research in the realm of hedonic choice. That is, little is known about how people choose between hedonic and utilitarian goods, how people compose a portfolio of hedonic goods, and how they vary choices over time to satisfy their need for

variety. It is our hope that this session will spur additional work in this under-researched area.

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

“Let Us Eat and Drink; For Tomorrow We Shall Die: Mortality Salience and Hedonic Choice”

Baba Shiv, University of Iowa
Rosellina Ferraro, Duke University
James R. Bettman, Duke University

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 seem to have led to profound changes in people's behaviors. Anecdotal evidence suggests that people began to break their diets, buy more daring clothing, drink more heavily, and take inherently more risky actions (e.g., meeting an Internet friend in person) (Barnes and Petersen 2001). Although the events of September 11th may be an extreme instance, people are confronted with their mortality on a regular basis; e.g., while driving by a fatal car accident, after hearing of the death of an acquaintance, or while hearing of a murder on the news. Given that people are exposed to death on a regular basis, it is interesting to speculate and examine whether awareness of one's mortality can lead to more disinhibited consumption behaviors.

Research on Terror Management Theory (TMT) and self-regulation provides a conceptual foundation to examine these issues. According to TMT, making people's salient mortality activates coping mechanisms that serve to shield people from feelings of anxiety. One way in which people have been found to cope is by focusing on their physical bodies as a way of boosting their self-esteem (e.g., Goldenberg et al. 2000). This coping strategy has been found to be prevalent among individuals who feel that they are successfully meeting internalized standards regarding their bodies. For example, Goldenberg et al. (2000) found that participants with high body-esteem (i.e., those who felt they met internalized standards) increased self-monitoring of their bodies following reminders of mortality, while those with low body-esteem decreased such self-monitoring. Self-monitoring, in turn, has been found to be crucial for self-regulation. For example, Heatherton and Baumeister (1991) found that compared to high levels of self-monitoring, low levels result in more disinhibited eating, particularly among dieters than non-dieters.

Taking the food category as an example, the arguments presented above lead to the following conclusions. When people become aware of their mortality, those high in body-esteem are likely to increase self-monitoring, and, therefore, increase self-regulation. Consequently, such individuals are likely to opt for products that are beneficial in the long run, such as fruit salad, rather than products that provide short-term hedonic benefits, such as chocolate cake. On the other hand, those low in body-esteem are likely to decrease self-monitoring, resulting in a breakdown in self-regulation. In the case of food products, this breakdown is more likely to occur for dieters than for non-dieters, i.e., for women than for men, based on research by Hawkins, Turrell, and Jackson 1983, which suggests that a very high percentage of women in the US tend to be dieters. Consequently, following reminders of mortality, women who are low on body-esteem are more likely to suffer breakdowns in self-regulation and choose products that provide short-term hedonic benefits such as chocolate compared to (1) men (who tend not to be high on dieting), and (2) women who are high

on body-esteem. In other words, in the context of a choice between chocolate cake and fruit salad, we predict a three-way, mortality-salience by body-esteem by gender interaction.

The above predictions were supported across two studies. For example, in one study, participants in the mortality salience condition were asked to describe their reactions and feelings regarding the September 11th tragedy while participants in the control condition were asked to describe their reactions and feelings regarding the Old Capital fire, a fire that destroyed a historic monument at the University of Iowa. Reactions and feelings to the fire were expected to be sad but mortality was not expected to be invoked as there were no deaths. Participants were later given a choice between chocolate cake and fruit salad. Each participant's body esteem was measured using the Body-Esteem Scale (BES). The results of this study indicate a significant main effect of BES, a significant interaction effect of mortality salience and BES, a significant interaction effect between BES and gender, and a significant three-way interaction between mortality salience, BES, and gender. In the mortality salience condition, females with low BES scores were more likely to choose the chocolate cake than were females with high BES scores. There was no significant difference for males with low compared to high BES scores. In the control condition (i.e., no mortality salience), there was no significant difference in chocolate cake selection between females with low BES and females with high BES. There was also no significant difference for the male participants. These results suggest that mortality salience did lead to more disinhibited choices for females with low levels of body-esteem than for males and for females high on body-esteem. We discuss the implications of our findings and present several directions for future research.

“Diversification and Partition Dependence in Consumer Choice”

Craig R. Fox, UCLA

Rebecca K. Ratner, University of North Carolina

Daniel S. Lieb, Duke University

Studies of choice behavior suggest that consumers typically seek variety among hedonic products when making multiple selections simultaneously (e.g., Simonson, 1990) or even sequentially (e.g., Ratner, Kahn & Kahneman, 1999). More generally, they seem to exhibit a “diversification bias” (Read & Loewenstein, 1995) that appears in other contexts including allocation of investment funds (Langer & Fox, 2003), benefits and burdens (e.g., Messick, 1993), and probabilistic beliefs (Fox & Rottenstreich, 2003).

The purpose of the present research is to demonstrate that consumers' bias toward diversification among hedonic products can give rise to choices that vary systematically as a function of how the options are subjectively partitioned by the decision maker. Early evidence of this phenomenon can be found in Brenner, Rottenstreich & Sood (1999), who showed that options are more popular when presented as a singleton against a group of alternatives. We introduce “partition dependence” to consumer researchers and to relate it to previously documented phenomena such as variety-seeking and grouping effects. We propose that when consumers are presented with a set of hedonic options from which they must make multiple selections, their choices are governed by some compromise between their most preferred options and a selection that is diversified over some partition of the set of options. Partition dependence can be demonstrated by manipulating the salience of alternative partitions of the option space and by observing a shift toward choices that are diversified over each subset created by the partitions.

We demonstrate partition dependence in a wide range of consumer choice settings. In several studies we group options by

levels of a particular attribute and find that respondents tend to allocate their choices more evenly across different levels of the attribute that we happen to make salient. For instance, we asked individuals which of three movies they would like to take home with them and told them that several participants would be randomly selected at the end of the semester to receive their chosen movie titles. Half the participants saw the movies grouped by movie genre (i.e., drama, comedy, vs. action) whereas half saw the same movies grouped by country of origin (i.e., British, Australian, vs. Canadian films). Our partitioning of the options strongly influenced individuals' choices: 47% chose one of each genre when they were grouped by genre, whereas only 20% chose one of each genre when they were grouped by country. Similarly 63% chose one from each country when they were grouped by country, whereas 47% chose one from each country when they were grouped by genre. In a follow-up study we find partition dependence in physical grouping of options. Participants in one study were asked to choose five candies from a set of four types (Tootsie Rolls, Starlight Mints, etc.) that were piled by type into three large bowls (two bowls contained a single type and one contained two types of candy). Diversification across this physical partition led participants to choose significantly more pieces of candy types that were presented in bowls by themselves than candy types that were presented in the mixed bowl. This occurred despite the fact that participants did not judge the singleton flavors to be more popular or better tasting.

We extend partition dependence to the domain of intertemporal choice by asking MBA students when they would like to consume three free fancy lunches (some were selected at random to receive dated meal coupons). Respondents tended to distribute their meals evenly over the periods into which we arbitrarily partitioned the upcoming school year. Hence, they were more likely to consume meals during the Fall semester (the first two terms of the MBA calendar) when the year was partitioned into {Term 1, Term 2, Spring semester} than when the year was partitioned into {Fall Semester, Spring semester}. We extend partition dependence to the allocation of money over charity funds that are organized hierarchically. When respondents were asked allocate a donation among one international fund and four local funds they gave a median 20% to the international fund. However, when they were asked to first allocate their donation geographically (international versus local) then among the four local funds, they gave a median 50% to the international fund.

In several additional studies, we find that strength and salience of preferences moderate partition dependence. In one study, we found that wine experts exhibited less partition dependence than did novices (i.e., experts' choices were less affected by whether wines were grouped by grape type or region), although we did find significant partitioning dependence among our self-reported experts. In another study, we found that partition dependence was less pronounced among participants who rated the attractiveness of the options (e.g., snack foods) *before* they made their choices compared to participants who rated the attractiveness of options *after* they made their choices. Moreover, partition dependence was less pronounced among participants who exhibited higher variance in their ratings of the choice alternatives compared to participants who exhibited lower variance in their ratings.

Our experiments collectively suggest that consumers offered multiple items from a set of hedonic options tend to diversify their choices across the groups into which options are subjectively partitioned. The partition-dependence phenomenon seems quite robust and may provide a powerful tool that marketers could use to influence consumer choices. Whereas previous researchers have focused the observation that individuals tend to spread their choices across available alternatives (Read & Loewenstein, 1995), we

extend this tradition by showing that the way in which people subjectively partition the set of options—by attribute, by physical arrangement, consumption time period, hierarchically—greatly influences the implications of such diversification strategies. Moreover, we identify strength and salience of preference as important moderators of diversification and partition dependence.

“Variety-Seeking Strategies in Hedonic Choice”

Jaap Boter, *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*

Jeff Inman, *University of Pittsburgh*

Michel Wedel, *University of Michigan*

Imagine you and your partner are planning an evening out. Last month's concert by the touring Boston Philharmonic was quite good and you both enjoyed their interpretation of Elgar's Enigma Variations. However, the Boston Philharmonic has moved on and although you liked their program, listening to the same pieces again seems unattractive. The brochures of the various venues in town list a great number of options: different classical music concerts as well as different genres and types of entertainment. It all looks interesting, but you both want to make sure it matches your tastes and is likely to be an entertaining evening out. What do you look for? Last month's venue usually has good performances but the other theater has an artist that is quite well known. You're also not too keen on drama that is too offensive. You want something different from last time, but you're not sure what and how.

Recent research suggests that variety seeking is quite germane to hedonic choice. For instance, variety seeking is more likely to occur on the sense of taste than on brand (Inman 2001) or when consumers derive greater hedonic characteristics from the product category (Van Trijp, Hoyer and Inman 1996). However, past research has restricted itself to simple trade-offs, such as flavor versus brand, and to single product categories, primarily food. As illustrated above, hedonic choice in real life is often more complex. In this research we address several pertinent questions vis-à-vis hedonic choice:

- Hedonic choice not only involves trading off flavor versus brand or song versus composer, but also related product categories (different types of desserts, different music genres). Is variety seeking *across* multiple related categories different from *within* category variety seeking? Is one form more likely than the other?
- Many forms of hedonic choice involve several senses in a single context. What does sensory satiety mean in a multi-sensory context? Are people more likely to resolve satiety within a sense (I want a different song), or also with a different sense (I want to switch from music to video)?
- Hedonic goods can consist of many different attributes. For instance, classical music involves sensory attributes such as instrument, historical period, and style and brand-like attributes that signal trust and quality, such as the performer, the composer or the venue. Are people heterogeneous in the attributes they seek variety on or base trust on?
- Some hedonic choice, particularly in entertainment, involves inhibiting factors, such as offensiveness. Although these are known to influence hedonic choice, they have not been considered in variety seeking research. How restrictive are factors such as complexity or offensiveness on variety seeking?

This presentation aims to address these four groups of questions using the performing arts as our focus. The Amsterdam

Central Box Office (AUB) is a collective promotion and sales initiative of all Amsterdam venues. Its annual brochure offers over 1,200 performances, bundled in more than 300 subscription series to one or more participating venues. These series represent a broad range of genres, both ‘high’ (e.g., opera) and ‘low’ (e.g., cabaret) forms of art, and are either ‘ready-mixed’ or specializing in one kind of performance. Note that clients may both seek variety within the choice for one season as well as across seasons.

In the AUB transaction system, every visitor, including every member of a group, is identified by a client number, providing us with a unique dataset with hedonic choices that can be traced at individual level. For our analysis we use client and sales data of three seasons (years) and have selected only those clients that participated all three seasons in any of the major genres. The resulting transaction database consists of approximately 14,400 clients who over the three year period chose from 3,300 events, packaged in 800 series, at 33 different venues. As clients on average buy more than one series per year, total sales accumulate to over 73,700 packages.

In addition, a panel of three expert judges rated all series on a number of variables on 100 point scales, including “brand” attributes (familiarity and perceived quality of pieces, authors, artists and venues), sensory attributes (primary sense that is addressed (visual/auditory) and sensory response that is addressed: esthetics, entertainment, excitement/arousal and empathy) and “barrier” attributes that may inhibit choice behavior (required level of arts knowledge, complexity/information load, offensiveness and unconventionalism).

The transaction data of who bought which series, combined with expert ratings of all products on several variables, allows us:

- To compare variety seeking within versus across product categories (i.e. genres).
- To investigate the role of sensory satiety within and across two senses: visual and auditory.
- To investigate heterogeneity among consumers in the different sensory and brand attributes they seek variety on or remain loyal to.
- To investigate the role of inhibiting factors by examining the role of the four barrier attributes.

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The Four Dimensional Impact of Color on Shopper's Emotions

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ABSTRACT

The PAD-scale has extensively been used in consumer research. Since studies on the impact of store interior color on affective responses are scarce and have focussed solely on color hue, neglecting color brightness and saturation, and furthermore only investigated a maximum of four hues, the research objective was to validate the PAD scale by means of an 8 (hue) by 2 (brightness) by 2 (saturation) experimental design. The data do not seem to underlie three, but four factors: pleasure, tension, excitement and dominance. Overall, the four-dimensional PAD-scores prove to have adequate reliability and validity, although the dominance construct is rather weak.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted in psychology that the first level of response to any environment is affective (emotional) in nature (Ittelson 1973). Empirical research has demonstrated that also shopping environments can evoke emotional responses in consumers (Machleit and Eroglu, 2000) and that these emotions, in turn, influence shopping behaviours and outcomes (Donovan and Rossiter 1982, Darden and Babin 1994, Sherman, Mathur and Smith 1997). A rather neglected emotions-evoking element in the shopping environment appears to be store interior color (Turley and Milliman 2000). Although store-interior color has been demonstrated to influence feelings, store and merchandise image, simulated purchases, purchasing rates, time spent in the store and retail display attraction (Bellizzi, Crowley and Hasty 1983, Bellizzi and Hite 1992, Crowley 1993), it is still unclear which emotions can be evoked by colors in the store interior. Indeed, the color stimuli used in previous studies did not represent a broad-based and balanced sample of color stimuli. In measuring store-evoked emotions, besides neglecting two of the three dimensions of color (saturation and brightness), also only a limited number of color hues have been incorporated in previous studies. Therefore, the objective of this study was to verify the validity and reliability of an emotion scale often used in marketing, atmospheric and consumer research, namely the PAD-scale (Mehrabian and Russell 1974), for measuring store-color-evoked emotions taking into account a multitude of color stimuli varying in hue, saturation and brightness.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One approach to the study of emotions, termed "*the discrete emotions perspective*", proposes that emotions can be conceptualised as a set of discrete and phenomenologically distinct affective states (e.g. Izard 1977, Plutchik 1980). Another approach, termed "*the dimensional perspective*", has suggested that a more basic understanding of the impact of emotions can be derived from reducing the various emotion types into a set of underlying dimensions (Russell and Lemay, 2000). Indeed, emotion categories appear to be related to each other in a systematic way (Russell and Lemay 2000). This underlying structure of emotions has received some renewed interest as researchers attempt to represent the relations among the various discrete emotions (see Diener 1999, Russell and Feldman Barrett 1999, Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer 1999). Both, factor analysis and multi-dimensional scaling of emotion-related expressions appear to converge systematically in a two- or three-dimensional representation (Russell and Lemay 2000).

In a two-dimensional circumplex, emotions range along an 'evaluation' dimension, from unpleasant to pleasant and, according

to the degree of stimulation, along an 'activation' dimension from un-aroused and inactive to aroused and active. Whereas Watson and Tellegen (1985) originally questioned the bipolarity of such dimensions, claiming negative and positive affect to be independent of each other (see also Babin, Darden and Babin 1998), they confirmed more recently that evidence supports such bipolarity (Watson and Tellegen 1999, Russell and Carroll 1999). Also Thayer's (1989) two-dimensional view of tense and energetic arousal can be integrated into this two-dimensional space when viewed as 45° rotations of one another (Yik, Russell and Feldman Barrett 1999). The eight combinations of pleasantness and activation identified by Larsen and Diener (1992) also clearly fit this circumplex. Thus, the existence of two basic dimensions, representing respectively hedonic tone and activation, has received extensive theoretical and empirical support (Mano 1997; Russell and Feldman Barrett 1999, Yik, Russell and Feldman Barrett 1999).

From an environmental psychology perspective, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) identified three underlying dimensions of emotions: (1) '*Pleasure*', referring to the degree to which a person feels happy or satisfied in a place; (2) '*Arousal*', concerning the degree of stimulation caused by an atmosphere and (3) '*Dominance*', indicating the degree to which a person feels in control of a situation and feels to have influence over his/her surroundings and others.

Several researchers have provided evidence that these three nearly independent bipolar PAD dimensions are both necessary and sufficient to adequately define emotional states (Holbrook and Batra 1987, Mehrabian 1995, Shaver et al. 2001). However, the PAD scales appear to exhibit near independence only when tested against a broad-based and balanced sample of stimuli. Mehrabian argues (1998, p6) that "*the difficulty to develop broad-based and emotionally-balanced samples of stimuli may explain the temptation for other investigators to delete the dominance factor and to rely only on the pleasure and arousal factors, or rotations thereof, to describe emotions*".

Emotional responses to the shopping environment

Although some researchers measured emotions elicited by the store environment based on the discrete emotions approach (e.g. Dawson, Bloch and Ridgway 1990, Menon and Dubé 2000), several others followed a dimensional approach. Yoo, Park & MacInnis (1998), for example, identified retail-specific emotions, which could be reduced to a 'pleasant versus unpleasant' dimension. In the same vein, Babin and Attaway (2000) operationalized atmospheric-based affect as two separate, negatively related dimensions: positive and negative affect. They did not incorporate a separate arousal component, claiming that, while in general arousal can be either positive or negative, in a retail setting arousal indicators appear to take on rather consistent positive or negative meanings. Nevertheless, Hui and Bateson (1991) argue that the 27 emotional terms, used in their study, form a perfect two-dimensional (pleasure-displeasure; arousing-unarousing) circumplex model, as proposed by Russell and Pratt (1980). Whereas Gröppel-Klein (1998) also argues that 'arousal' and 'pleasure' seem to converge in a retail setting, as 'positive activation' appears to be implicitly registered in the arousal construct, she acknowledges that consumers in a retail setting can also experience a pleasant state of low arousal (i.e. relaxation) and that also at the point-of-sale, too much arousal can be experienced as hectic and unpleasant (i.e. tension).

Donovan and Rossiter (1982) were the first to assess shoppers' in-store emotional states using Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) PAD scale, adapted a little to the retail setting. Nevertheless, for theoretical reasons (Russell and Pratt's 1980 conceptualization) as well as for a lack of empirical support (e.g. Donovan and Rossiter 1982, Greenland and McGoldrick 1994), several researchers investigating atmospheric effects of the store environment, have disregarded the dominance dimension and simply researched the pleasure and arousal dimensions (e.g. Donovan et al. 1994, Sherman, Mathur and Smith 1997, Van Kenhove and Desrumaux 1997). However, more recently, some researchers have focused again on the influence of dominance perceived at the point of sale (e.g. Gröppel-Klein 1998).

Affective responses to color

With regard to the "effects" of colors in the environment, the literature seems to contain mostly anecdotal evidence, revealing a severe lack of systematic empirical research. In fact, most color research is based on consumer evaluations of color chips and has been noted to be weak (Beach et al. 1988, Valdez 1993). According to Valdez (1993), a major area of concern involves the failure to use sufficiently reliable, valid or comprehensive "measures of emotional responses" to color stimuli. Examining emotional reactions as a function of the dimensions of color hue, saturation and brightness, Valdez and Mehrabian (1994) found support for the PAD-scale. Nevertheless, it is still unclear whether findings concerning affective responses to color patches can be generalized to colors applied to environments, such as the store interior.

Turning to the impact of color in the store interior on retail shoppers, to our knowledge only four laboratory experiments have been published (i.e. Bellizzi, Crowley and Hasty 1983, Middlestadt 1990, Bellizzi and Hite 1992, Crowley 1993). Bellizzi and Hite (1992) used the PAD-scale and found four factors underlying their data: pleasure ($\alpha=.89$), arousal ($\alpha=.88$), dominance ($\alpha=.79$), and freedom-of-movement (α not mentioned, explaining only 5.5% of the variance). Color effects (red/blue) could be observed on the pleasure dimension only. Crowley (1993) investigated the impact of store interior color on emotions by means of 20 semantic differential items. Color effects (4 hues) were observed on (1) an evaluative dimension (i.e. positive, attractive, relaxed, comfortable, good and pleasant; $\alpha=.91$) and on (2) a non-evaluative activation dimension (i.e. motivating, modern, colorful, stimulating, cheerful, lively and bright; $\alpha=.85$). Studies thus far have relied on the use of two to maximum four color stimuli, not selected for their diverging emotion-evoking capabilities. Also, up until now the focus has been on color hues (such as blue and red). Affective responses evoked by color-saturation (purity or intensity) and color-brightness (light to dark quality) were ignored completely. Yet, these neglected color dimensions may well be the major determining factors in color effects on human feelings. Previous studies in an advertising context (Gorn et al. 1997) and concerning plain color patches (Valdez and Mehrabian 1994) have shown that saturation and brightness have a significant impact on evoked emotions in their own right.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

As indicated before, the PAD-measure has been widely employed in marketing, atmospherics and consumer research. Also in studies concerning the impact of store-interior color on emotional and behavioral responses the PAD scale has been introduced (Bellizzi and Hite 1992). However, the scale has never been appropriately validated in this context. Since the validity of constructs forms a foundation for scientific progress in marketing (Steenkamp

& van Trijp, 1991), the objective of the current study was to validate the PAD-scale for capturing emotional responses to store-interior colors. Unlike other studies, a broad-based and balanced sample of color stimuli was used, taking into account all three dimensions of color (i.e. hue, saturation and brightness) (Munsell 1915, Kuehni 2002).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Stimuli. An 8 (hue) by 2 (saturation) by 2 (brightness) between subjects design was constructed, resulting in 32 different conditions. The 32 different colors were applied to an experimental store environment, developed in Computer Aided Design. It involved a design furniture and accessories store. Respondents were exposed to one of the 32 pictures¹ of the store-interior (16 by 16cm).

Respondents. Belgian subjects were intercepted by means of a random walk sampling procedure. About 25 respondents were selected per manipulation, according to predetermined quota for age and gender. This resulted in a total of 874 respondents, aged between 18 and 60 years, distributed almost equally among males and females for three age categories and more or less representative for the Belgian population as far as level of education, income and occupation are concerned.

PAD-measure. The three six-item semantic differential scales, measuring the PAD-dimensions of emotions elicited by the experimental store (Mehrabian and Russell 1974, Russell and Mehrabian 1977) were carefully translated in Dutch, with a forward and backward check. The items of the respective dimensions were intermixed and the direction of about half of the items was reversed.

CONSTRUCT VALIDATION OF THE PAD-EMOTION SCALE

According to previous research (Russell and Mehrabian 1977, Valdez and Mehrabian 1994) the six pleasure items, the six arousal items and the six dominance items indicate three underlying dimensions. In order to test the theoretical structure of the measurement instrument, a maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis with Varimax rotations is conducted using AMOS 3.62 (Arbuckle, 1997). This yielded however unacceptable goodness of fit scores ($\chi^2=1046.513$, $df=132$, $p<.001$, $\chi^2/df=7.928$) (see column 2 in table 2 for acceptable values). Therefore, we first explored the unidimensionality of the three constructs by means of Principal Component Factor Analyses (see Table 1).

The *pleasure* construct appears to be measured very well. The six items clearly underlie one pleasure construct, explaining 66.7% of the variance (Cronbach's $\alpha=.8970$).

With regard to the *arousal* construct, not one, but two factors are extracted with Eigenvalues exceeding unity, explaining together 54% of the variance (or respectively 30% and 24%). Also the Scree plot suggests at least two factors. Each item had a minimum factor-loading of .60 and no loading higher than .15 on the other factor. The reliability of the respective dimensions appears rather low (Cronbach's $\alpha=.59$ for the first factor and $r=.457$, $p<.001$ for the second factor).

The presence of two dimensions underlying the arousal construct has been encountered and rationalized in previous research (Walters, Apter and Svebak 1982, Thayer 1986, Gorn et al. 1997).

¹Their use as environmental simulations has been proven to be a valid method for studying the effects of environments on evaluations, affective responses and behavior (Russell and Mehrabian 1976, Bateson and Hui 1992, Areni, Sparks and Dunne, 1996).

TABLE 1
Principle Component Factor loadings with Varimax rotated solution

PLEASURE			AROUSAL		
	1-factor solution	$\alpha=.90$		2-factor solution	$\alpha=.59$ $r=.46$
P1	depressed–contented	.776	A1	relaxed–stimulated	.611
P2	unhappy–happy	.808	A2	calm–excited	.740
P3	unsatisfied–satisfied	.889	A4	dull–jittery	.673
P4	annoyed–pleased	.815	A6	unaroused–aroused	.651
P5	bored–relaxed	.826	A3	sluggish–frenzied	.851
P6	despairing–hopeful	.778	A5	sleepy–wide-awake	.845
DOMINANCE			DOMINANCE		
	1-factor solution	$\alpha=.58$		2-factor solution	$\alpha=.58$ $\alpha=.42$
D1	controlled–controlling	.756	D1	controlled–controlling	.763
D2	influenced–influential	.385	D2	influenced–influential	.789
D3	cared for–in control	.493	D6	guided–autonomous	.551
D4	awed–important	.608	D3	cared for–in control	.600
D5	submissive–dominant	.440	D4	awed–important	.578
D6	guided–autonomous	.675	D5	submissive–dominant	.758

Validating the PANAS-X scale², Watson and Clark (1999) encountered besides the two broad higher-order positive and negative affect dimensions, another dimension, comprising 'arousal-related' affective states as fatigue, surprise and serenity, bearing significant loadings on both the positive as well as the negative general affect factors. Reversal theory, a phenomenological theory originally proposed by Smith and Apter 1975 (Apter 1979, 1982) suggests that instead of one single curve (optimal arousal theory), there are two hypothetical curves relating arousal to hedonic tone. According to this theory, there are two optimal points or "preferred levels" of arousal positioned towards opposite ends of the arousal dimension (i.e. "reversals"), with one system being an "arousal avoiding system" and the other being an "arousal seeking system". Only one is preferred at a given moment "being the preferred level of the arousal system that is operative at that moment" (Walters, Apter and Svebak 1982). The system of emotions proposed by Wundt (1896) actually incorporates besides a hedonic ('unpleasant-pleasant') dimension, two complimentary bipolar arousal dimensions ('quiet-excited' and 'relaxed-tense'). In a retailing context, the PAD-arousal construct has also previously been shown to be rather ambiguous (e.g. Donovan et al. 1994, Van Kenhove and Desrumaux 1997, Gröppel-Klein 1998, Gröppel-Klein and Baun 2001). Consistent with the foregoing operationalization of arousal, the first dimension (relaxation-tension) appears to be negatively related with pleasure (Pearson correlation=-.732, $p<.001$), while the second dimension (boredom-excitement) appears to be positively related with pleasure ($r=.578$, $p<.001$), while the two arousal dimensions do not seem to be correlated at all ($r=.001$).

With regard to the *dominance* construct, also two factors seem to underlie the measurement instrument, instead of only one (explaining respectively 27% and 26% of the variance). The Scree plot also suggests a two-factor solution. All items could rather clearly be ascribed to one of the two factors. Each item had a minimum factor-

loading of .55 and no loading higher than .40 on the other factor. However, the reliability of the respective dimensions appears to be very low (Cronbach's $\alpha=.56$ and .42 respectively). The factor scores of both the one- and two-factor solutions are presented in table 1. Because of the low reliability of the two-factor solution and the lack of a theoretical framework to support such a multi-dimensional dominance construct, a one-factor solution will be pursued. In this case, deleting item d2 ('influenced–influential') appears to be called for because of a very low factor loading. Cronbach's α for the five remaining items is .60, which is still rather low.

Uni-dimensionality

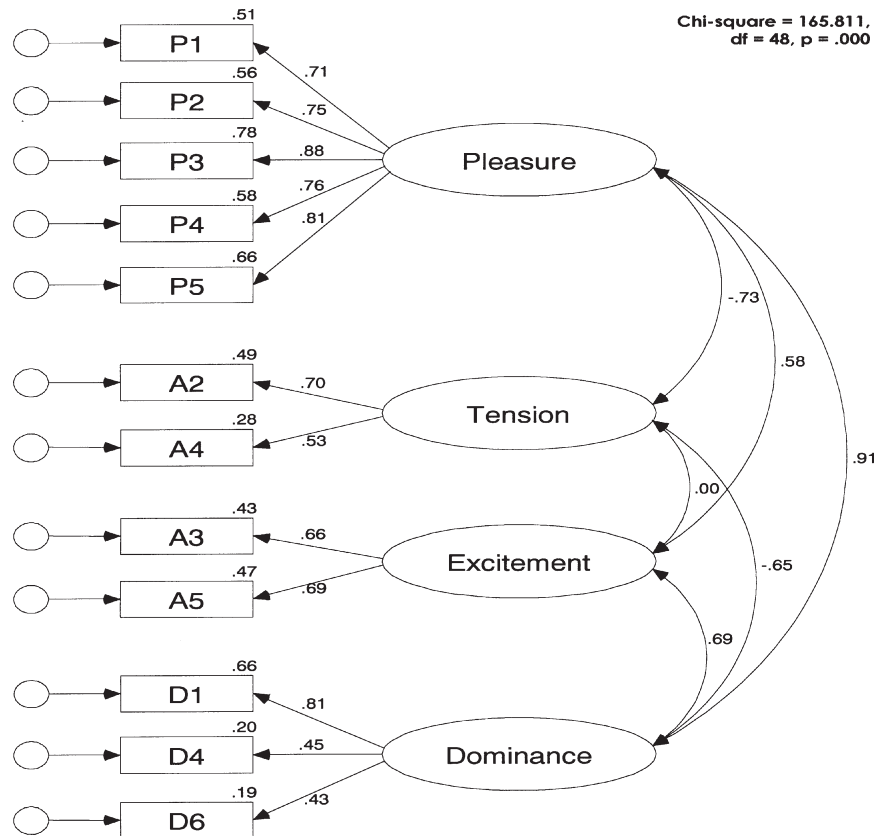
A maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis, conducted on each of the constructs separately, indeed reveals two separate non-related arousal dimensions within the arousal construct. The pleasure construct clearly is uni-dimensional. For the dominance construct, the one-dimensional solution performs best and appears to be highly reliable.³ In order to test the proposed theoretical structure of the measurement instrument, a maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis is conducted on the 17 remaining items. On the basis of the exploratory factor analyses four correlated underlying dimensions are assumed: pleasure, tension, excitement and dominance. First of all, three items (a6, d3 and d5) have to be eliminated because of extremely low standardized regression weights ($<.40$). This way a satisfactory overall fit of the model is achieved ($\chi^2=278.767$, $df=71$, $\chi^2/df=3.926$, $p<0.001$).⁴

³Correlating three pairs of error-terms (error d3–d6; error d4–d5 and error d3–d5) resulted in excellent goodness of fit scores ($c^2=.22$, $df=2$, $p=0.896$, $c^2/df=.11$) (Cote, Netemeyer and Bentler 2001).

⁴The chi square test is highly dependent on the sample size and its hypothesis of an exact reproduction of the sample covariance matrix by the implied covariance matrix of the model is often considered to be overly rigid. Models that fit the data well, often have to be rejected on the basis of the chi square value (Bollen and Long, 1993; Bagozzi and Baumgartner, 1994).

²An expanded form of the positive and negative affect schedule, designed explicitly to reflect the hierarchical structure of self-rated affect.

FIGURE 1
Path coefficients of the four-correlated factor PAD emotion construct



Nevertheless, because large standardized residuals⁵ point to possible multidimensionality (Steenkamp and Van Trijp, 1991), these were carefully examined. Five standardized residuals were detected exceeding the |2.58| norm. Dropping the corresponding items (p6 and a1) (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1989), a very satisfactory four-factor model was obtained (see Table 2 and Figure 1). With this solution no standardized residuals exceed the |2.58| norm.

Within-Method Convergent Validity

According to Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991) a condition for within-method convergent validity is that the factor regression coefficients on a particular item are statistically significant (weak condition) and substantial (stronger condition). With respect to the latter, it has been suggested by Hildebrandt (1987) that the correlation between the item and the construct should exceed .50. For the adapted four-factor PAD-emotion scale in this study, except for two dominance items, all of the factor regression coefficients exceed the .50 norm. Moreover, all factor regression coefficients were highly significant (critical ratio's > 11).

Reliability

To assess the reliability of the respective dimensions, the composite reliabilities were ascertained, as well as the average variances extracted⁶ The 'pleasure' factor proved to be very reliable with a composite reliability of .89 and an average variance

extracted of .62. 'Tension' scores considerably lower, with a composite reliability of only .55. The average variance extracted reached only .38. Because only two items were retained to assess this factor, also Pearson's correlation is checked, which appears to be highly significant (r=.368, p<.001). The composite reliability of 'excitement' reaches .62, with an average variance extracted of .45. We verified Pearson's correlation in this case too, as only two items are included here as well. This also proved to be highly significant (r=.452, p<.001). Finally the composite reliability for the 'dominance' construct amounts to .58, which is also rather low. The average variance extracted reached only .35. We can conclude that some random error is captured by our measures, in addition to what we intended to measure. Whereas the pleasure factor scores extremely well on reliability, the other factors score somewhat lower, but still almost meet the minimum criteria of .60. In view of the low number of items retained to capture the underlying constructs, this is rather satisfactory.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the goodness of fit indices show a good fit for the resulting four-factor model. The uni-dimensionality, within-method convergent validity and reliability of the underlying pleasure, tension, excitement and dominance constructs prove to be adequate. However, we note that dominance does not score very well with regard to reliability and that the standardized regression

⁵Standardized residuals are the residuals from the observed and reproduced covariance matrix divided by their asymptotic standard errors, and values exceeding |2.58| indicate misspecification (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1988).

⁶For a scale to possess good reliability, its composite reliability should be between 0.60 and 0.80 and the average variance extracted at least 0.50 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

TABLE 2
Goodness of fit measures for the resulting four-correlated-factor PAD scale

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	4-correlated factor model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	165.811, (48)
p-value	>.05	0.000
χ^2/df	<5	3.454
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	>.90	0.965
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	>.80	0.943
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.90	0.957
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.90	0.969
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.08	0.056
Standardized residuals > 2.58	No	No
Factor regression coefficients > .50	Yes	10 out of 12

weights of two dominance items do not score high either. Moreover, the 'dominance' dimension appears to be extremely highly correlated with the 'pleasure' dimension ($r=.91$). In order to test whether 'pleasure' and 'dominance' do not involve in fact one and the same dimension, we investigated the discriminant validity of the dominance construct. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) a scale possesses discriminant validity if the average variance extracted by the underlying construct is larger than the shared variance (i.e. the squared intercorrelation) with other latent constructs. Since the squared correlation among pleasure and dominance (.83) exceeds the variance extracted in both the pleasure and dominance scales (respectively .62 and .35), the discriminant validity of the dominance construct is rather questionable. Another, less stringent, analysis of discriminant validity consists of examining whether applying an additional restriction of perfect correlation between the two dimensions does not result in a better fit (Steenkamp and van Trijp 1991). This can be examined by determining the difference between the χ^2 of the nested model (i.e. the more restricted model with the constraint of perfect correlation between pleasure and dominance) and the χ^2 of the initial model (allowing for free correlation) and dividing this result by the difference in the degrees of freedom between the two models (Sharma, 1996). This test $[(180.56-165.81)/(49-48)=14.75 > 3.84 (\chi^2_{0.95, 1df})]$ reveals that the additional constraint of perfect correlation between the pleasure and dominance dimensions is not justified. The model assuming free correlation between the two factors fitted the data significantly better than the model constraining the correlation to one. Therefore, pleasure and dominance prove to be two highly correlated but separate factors.⁷

Still, because of the low within-method convergent validity and reliability, the question remains whether or not the 'dominance' dimension should be dropped altogether. In line with Russell and Pratt's (1980) conceptualisation that the 'dominance' dimension is not applicable in environments calling for an affective response, we could consider ignoring the 'dominance' dimension, as several researchers have done in the past (e.g., Van Kenhove and Desrumaux 1997, Sherman et al. 1997). However, several other researchers in the retailing context, have referred to the importance of the all too often ignored 'dominance' dimension (Gröppel-Klein 1998, Foxall 2000). Foxall (1997) proposes that the role of 'dominance' may depend on the type of consumer setting investigated. This may be

responsible for the failure of past studies to find a role for 'dominance'. In the same vein, Turley and Milliman (2000) also note that the importance of the 'dominance' dimension may be context specific, depending on the independent store environmental variables investigated. Since the specific effects of color on the 'dominance' dimension have been demonstrated before (Valdez and Mehrabian, 1994), and the adapted 4-factor model appears to have an adequate overall fit, it is suggested to retain the 'dominance' dimension. However, it has to be noted that results concerning the 'dominance' dimension should be interpreted with caution.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

One limitation to this study concerns the measurement of the 'arousal construct'. In this study, emotional responses to the store environment were measured by means of self-report questionnaires. Gröppel-Klein and Baun (2001) however, point out that verbal scales may not be appropriate to capture arousal. Construct validation of the PAD-emotion scale revealed two separate 'tension' and 'excitement' dimensions within the arousal scale. However, purification of the scale resulted in only two remaining items capturing tension and two other items measuring excitement. For future research, we recommend the use of better 'tension' and 'excitement' scales and suggest that perhaps also electrodermal activity could be measured as an arousal indicator (cfr. Gröppel-Klein and Baun 2001).

Another important limitation to this study concerns the 'external validity' of the findings. Unfortunately, as a direct consequence of the main concern for internal validity, laboratory experiments are generally rather weak in generalizability. Therefore, an extension of this study to field experiments is called for to determine the ecological validity and generalizability of our findings. Actually 'being' in an environment where the wall colors are manipulated, would probably evoke stronger emotional reactions than 'viewing a picture' in which wall colors are manipulated.

Finally, it would be interesting to know which affective responses are evoked by specific color tones and whether these store-color-evoked emotional reactions actually influence consumers' approach and/or avoidance intentions towards the store (i.e. purchase intentions, intentions to stay longer and explore the store, intentions to spend more money and visit the store again...). The current study forms part of an encompassing study, which aims to provide answers to these managerially relevant questions.

⁷This procedure for identifying discriminant validity was also followed by Babin, Darden and Babin, 1998.

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When Consumers Take Their Sense of Smell for Granted

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present series of Experiments is to investigate the effects of ambient odor on consumers' product evaluations. The results of our studies show that ambient odor indeed has an impact on subsequent judgments. We moreover showed that when consumers have insufficient processing resources, ambient odor influenced subsequent judgments even when it is perceived as incongruent with the object of evaluation.

Consistent with prior studies (e.g. Mitchell, Kahn, and Knasko, 1995; Bone and Jantrania, 1992) our results indicate that the effect is dependent on the level of congruence of the ambient odor with the to be evaluated product: ambient odor is likely to influence subsequent judgments when it is perceived as appropriate for the evaluation. When the odor is inappropriate, it is less likely to influence subsequent judgments.

However, we were able to extend existing research on ambient odor by showing that the impact of this congruence effect is moderated by the availability of cognitive resources that consumers are willing to allocate to the judgment task. That is, while congruence of the odor has an impact when availability of processing resources is high, it seems to be irrelevant when availability of processing resources is low.

In 3 experiments, where we used a variety of factors related to a manipulation of cognitive resources (Need for Cognition, task motivation, and levels of arousal) we showed that when cognitive resources are scarce, pleasant odor has a positive impact on judgments—even when this odor is highly inappropriate for judgments.

We moreover showed (see Experiment 3) that these effects also hold when ambient odor is perceived as unpleasant. That is, when confronted with the odor of a spoiled banana, participants who had a limited amount of cognitive resources available consistently rated the to be evaluated product as more negative compared to a control condition. They could not partial out the influence of the inappropriate unpleasant odor. In contrast, when sufficient processing resources were available, evaluations were more negative when odor was congruent with the to be evaluated product (i.e. a banana), but not when it was incongruent. Here too then, availability of processing resources resulted in an appropriate discounting of the influence of unpleasant odor.

Our results are congruent with the framework of schema-congruency literature (Meyers-Levy and Sternthal, 1993; Meyers-Levy and Tybout, 1997) that explains context effects (such as ambient odor) by assuming the moderating role of both congruency of the context (ambient odor) with the target as well as the availability of cognitive resources when performing the task.

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Why Consumption Vision? Understating Consumer Value in Anticipatory Consumption Imaging

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

There is a certain fascination engendered by thoughts about the future. As unrealized, unactualized space, a personal future is an open canvas upon which one may virtually create any kind of mosaic of images—a collage of past experiences; wholly novel, imaginative creations; mere extrapolations of present experience; or a rich combinatory mix of such elements. Given the central importance of the imaginative creation of possible consumption futures, the scant attention these mental process have received within the consumption literature is a bit surprising.

Within this literature, a narrow range of effects and proposed antecedents have been examined. (see Shiv and Huber 2000; McConnel, Niedermeier, et. al. 2000; Phillips, 1996; Phillips, Baumgartner, and Olson 1995). Others have looked at pre-acquisition fantasy as a type of anticipatory imaging (Fournier and Guiry 1993). The effect of anticipatory mental imaging in advertising comprehension has also been investigated (Krishnamurthy and Sujana 1999; Phillips 1996). Taken together, the brief history of inquiry into anticipatory consumption imaging (or consumption visions) is a rather piecemeal affair.

What is needed is the development of a conceptual framework for consumption visions that can unite the best of our thinking and guide future research (Christensen 2002). An important component in that larger theory of consumption visions is an understanding of why consumers create them. What value do consumers see in the process? How do they perceive that consumption visions help them? How do consumption visions fit into their lives?

We term anticipatory mental images of future product use *consumption visions* and define them as self-referent images or mental simulations of the self-relevant consequences of product consumption and the resulting phenomenological experience (thoughts and emotions) associated with those anticipated consequences.

Understanding the “why” of consumption visions marks the investigative thrust of this work. This research question dictates the choice of a Zaltman metaphor-elicitation technique (ZMET—Zaltman 1997) research method. One of the strengths of the method is its ability to elicit consumers’ meaning about the personal relevance of the topic and then map those meanings in an aggregate consensus map or mental model (Christensen and Olson 2002; Zaltman 1997; Zaltman and Coulter 1995). Understanding the personal relevance of consumption visions in the lives of consumers is the heart of the present research question and thus the ZMET method is particularly appropriate.

THE ZMET STUDY

Ten repeat informants were selected for this study from a pool of participants of a prior diary study of consumption visions. Respondents were purposefully selected to represent a range of life stages and demographics. Each participated in a semi-structured depth interview which followed closely the several steps outlined in the literature for a ZMET study (see Christensen and Olson 2002; Zaltman 1997; Zaltman and Coulter 1995).

ZMET Analysis

Analysis of the transcribed data were content coded to identify underlying themes, metaphors, constructs, and interrelationships

between codes following the grounded theory techniques of Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1990). Subsequent to this analysis and consistent with heuristics presented in the literature (Christensen and Olson 2002) a consensus map of the aggregated themes found in the data was constructed.

THE ZMET STUDY FINDINGS

Broad Meaning Themes

The consensus mapping process revealed five broad, collective orientations or themes regarding consumption visions shared among the respondents. These are:

- Consumption Visions are sometimes *Fantasy*
- Consumption Visions are often an *Escape*
- Consumption Visions are sometimes part of *Decision Making*
- Consumption Visions are part of *Planning*
- Consumption Visions are *Motivational*

Consumption Visions as Fantasy

Fantasy is closely coupled with escape. Fantasy allows a freedom for the imagination. Part of the freedom found in fantasy visions is the ability to be adventurous and try new things without fear or consequences. In the mental world, respondents can “be adventurous”, “try new things”, and see if what is imagined is desirable and/or possible. This is because consumption visions have “no consequences” and thus “no fear.” One respondent brought in a picture of ice-cream to express the idea that consumption visions are fat-free. “They are non-fattening,” she said. “They can be as indulgent as you like.” Without the fear of ramifications, fantasy consumption visions are a hedonic pursuit in which consumers actually consume the vision. At least part of what makes fantasy so enjoyable is that what is imagined is a perfected world—an ideal state.

Consumption Visions as an Escape

These participants unanimously relate that consumption visions are often used as an escape from reality. As an escape, consumption visions help consumers cope. One respondent indicated that she used consumption visions of the hedges and landscaping she wanted around her home to help “get me through labor and delivery.” An important to and from dynamic emerged. The consumption vision is an escape *from* the dysphoric current reality *to* an alternative, perfected, mental world. The great dividend of this process was a sense of relaxation and peace.

Visualizing A Goal

For these respondents, visualizing and personal goal is a central aspect of consumption visions. This mental process of goal visualization plays an important role in decision making, consumer planning, and of course as motivation.

Consumption Visions as Part of Decision Making

Consumption visions as envisioned goals are central to the process of consumer decision making. One informant said, “Forming a consumption vision helps me make decisions about what I’m going to buy.” Consumption visions are identified as an important

component of problem solving from problem recognition to solution planning and evaluating different product alternatives.

Consumption Visions as Part of Consumer Planning

One respondent said, "Consumption visions are fun. They help with planning and organizing your life." Another said, "I think my visions help me fix the future. They help me prepare."

These respondents describe a two part process to using consumption visions in planning. The process seems to begin with a macro simulation of an event—such as planning the events of the day as in the last example. As the large scale event is mentally simulated, smaller items that need attention are recognized and elaborated.

Consumption Visions and Motivation

"A consumption visions motivates me and moves me to do things. The vision makes it all worthwhile—all the extra work you have to go through to get there." There was an oft-repeated mantra in these data that echo the words of Napoleon Hill, "What the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve." One said, "I can imagine it until I will make it happen." Experiencing the move from vision to reified event gives consumers a feeling of accomplishment that imbues confidence—"If I can do it once, I can do it again."

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The Impact of Humor in Face-to-Face and Electronic Service Encounters

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ABSTRACT

In this study we attempt to nuance the intricate interplay between the use of humor and the outcome of the service in establishing customer's evaluations of face-to-face and electronic encounters. In experiments we manipulated type of humor and outcome of the service encounter. The results suggest that the impact of the type of humor used in a face-to-face encounter is more important than the outcome, whereas in electronic encounters, the impact of the outcome of the service encounter is more important than the type of humor. Also, in electronic encounters related humor might compensate partly for an unfavorable service outcome.

INTRODUCTION

Academics and practitioners agree that the underlying premise of customer-firm encounters is to make them memorable and satisfying. This focus on creating memorable experiences by blending functionality, fulfillment and fun has recently drawn attention to the importance of hedonic aspects of the service encounter. In general, these hedonic aspects refer to the enjoyment resulting from the fun and play arising during the experience (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982) that has been represented in the retail context by the theme of 'shopping as fun' (Babin et al, 1994). This theme has serious consequences, for it has been argued that gauges of the hedonic quality of the experience reflect future economic performance.

One important way to increase the hedonic quality of the shopping experience as well as the positive evaluation of the product or service itself is the use of humor (Childers et al., 2001; Perry & Jenzowsky, 1997). To date, most research on the use of humor in a marketing context has been conducted in the area of mass communication channels. It has been demonstrated that humor in advertising may be used to create product and service awareness as well as a favorable image and to stimulate customer purchase behavior (Alden & Hoyer, 1993; Spotts et al., 1997). Moreover, it has been demonstrated that advertising and promotion that incorporates humor does not only lead to positive product evaluations and buying intentions but also seems to have a positive effect on the way in which people enjoy the viewing experience. For instance, Perry et al. (1997, p.395) report that they find "strong support for the use of humorous commercials to boost program enjoyment levels."

With respect to service delivery formats, varying from traditional face-to-face to technology-based self-service delivery modes, the picture of the incremental value of humor as a potential source of enjoyment and determinant of customer's evaluations is less clear. From research in the social sciences, there is strong evidence that humor may serve different functions in face-to-face contact (Wilson, 1979), varying from the communication of a person's attitude in social interactions to the transformation of negative emotions into positive ones and the development of a basis for relationships between people. Furthermore, there is an accumulating body of evidence that humor is also important in electronic channels (Babin et al., 1994; Childers et al., 2001). For instance, it has been suggested that the use of humor in e-mail campaigns has a positive effect on sales (Kaye, 1999) and that for on-line customers "the best experiences will sparkle with humor" (McKeown,

2002 p. 256). Therefore, we study the influence of humor on customer evaluations with respect to two service delivery formats.

In the investigation, we take two important contingencies into account: the nature of the service outcome (e.g., favorable vs. unfavorable) and the type of humor. It is well established that customer evaluations of services depend both on the service process and outcome (Brown & Swartz, 1989). To date, the service marketing literature has focused extensively on service process. Only recently, researchers have begun to explore the role of service outcome in service evaluation. An important issue is to determine the relative importance of process and outcome in evaluations as well as the effect of the interaction between process and outcome. With respect to process, in face-to-face encounters humor is primarily associated with the attitude and behavior of the service employee, while in electronic encounters humor is an integral part of the (virtual) design of the service process.

Furthermore, in the humor research literature frequently a distinction has been made between related and unrelated humor (e.g., Zillman & Bryant, 1983). In the context of learning and advertising, studies have demonstrated that the use of related humor has more positive effects than the use of unrelated humor (Spotts et al., 1997; Zillman et al., 1983). However, no studies are reported with respect to the effect of related vs. unrelated humor in service encounters. The purpose of our study is to investigate how the interplay between the type of humor and the outcome of the service determines customer's evaluations of face-to-face and electronic encounters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Humor is an integral part of the human condition and yet many have struggled to come up with an exact conceptualization. In order to develop a basis suitable for empirical study, various authors have suggested technique-oriented and descriptive typologies of humor. One frequently used typology is that of related vs. unrelated humor. Related humor is defined as humor that is pertaining to the particular situation, message, or product, while unrelated humor is not (c.f., Zillman et al., 1983). In general, it has been suggested that adult audiences (as opposed to children) respond well to humor that is integrated and related (Zillmann et al., 1983), but the findings with respect to unrelated humor remain conflicting and are not conclusive. It has been argued that people do not respond to humor that has no apparent connections to the message, and is obviously interspersed to liven things up. It also has been suggested that unrelated humor may be even perceived as inconsequential or distracting and may be met with impatience, if not with annoyance, whereas related humor can be an effective way to help remember examples of content (Zillmann et al., 1983). In another study (Hezel et al., 1982), it was found that teachers who use related and relevant humor were judged to be more interesting, entertaining and enjoyable than those who used unrelated humor. In general, these authors concluded that teachers using unrelated humor may well be perceived as being funny and possibly gain appeal in the sense of being liked, but at the same time the use of unrelated humor was detrimental to rapport and to be most harmful to the assessment of the teacher's competence. Furthermore, it may create a loss in attentiveness and ultimately result in reduced information acquisition from messages.

These findings are confirmed by several studies on the use of humor in advertising (Spotts et al., 1997). It has been argued that the relatedness of humor to the ad, product, or service is an important aspect that influences the effectiveness of humor in advertising. Moreover, it is concluded that the most important advantage of related humor is that the customer's attention remains focused on the core product or service, which is not the case with unrelated humor. Also, others suggest that humor related to the product is superior to unrelated humor. Scott et al. (1990) found that humor is only effective when humor is related to the product, service and event. Their results supported that related humor enhances patronage activity, but unrelated humor has either no impact or a negative impact.

The effects of humor have mainly been studied in the context of advertising and interpersonal, face-to-face interactions (primarily outside the marketing domain), and so far there has been little work on related vs. unrelated humor in the context of computer-mediated (CM) interactions. The few studies on CM interactions, though, found positive effects of humor. For instance, Baym (1995) states that humor can be accomplished in CM communication and can create social meaning on-line. She shows how humor creates group solidarity, group identity, and also individual identity in on-line encounters.

With respect to the customer evaluation of service encounters, the focus in our study is on satisfaction, enjoyable interaction, and behavioral intentions. It is well established these three constructs are critical measures of face-to-face and electronic service encounters (Meuter et al., 2000; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Szymanski & Hise, 2000). The concept of customer satisfaction bears relevance to both discrete encounters and to relationships. This study focuses on single encounter satisfaction; it reflects the feelings of the customer about a single interaction with the firm and consequently result from the evaluation of the events that occur during that specific period of time.

A second evaluative judgment concerns enjoyable interaction. Enjoyable interaction might be interpreted as an aspect of hedonic quality. With respect to enjoyable interaction, several researchers identified its importance in positively influencing customers' judgments in off-line (e.g., Babin et al., 1994; Gremler et al., 2000) and on-line (e.g., Childers et al., 2001) encounters. A service provider might use different strategies to create an enjoyable interaction. For example, the firm may use humor, build a colorful design, include sufficient sensory information into web-sites, increase flexibility of navigation, and personalize the service (e.g., Childers et al., 2001; Gremler et al., 2000).

A final construct that needs to be incorporated is behavioral intentions, i.e., the intention of the customer to return to the (e-)service and to make recommendations. An initial contact between two parties might result in an ongoing relationship and consequently result in a customer's return. It has been suggested that given the essence of customer choice in services, it is imperative to examine customer's behavioral intentions with respect to returning to the firm and positive word of mouth communications (Ostrom & Iacobucci, 1995).

Although the three dependent measures are well documented in off-line contexts (e.g., Oliver, 1997), recent studies suggest satisfaction, enjoyable interaction, and customer loyalty to be important in on-line environments as well (Szymanski et al., 2000; Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2001). In summary, it can be argued that the service encounter is positively evaluated when encounter satisfaction is high, customers experience an enjoyable interaction and have positive behavioral intentions. In the next section, we develop our research hypotheses.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

In this research, we study the effects of the service process (e.g., the use of related vs. unrelated humor) and the service outcome on the customer's evaluation of both the face-to-face and electronic encounter. Service process reflects the way the service is delivered to the customer and evaluating the process, several dimensions may be taken into account, such as the reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy of the service provider. It has frequently been argued that a favorable process increases a positive evaluation (Iacobucci et al., 1994). In this study, we focus on the use of humor, i.e., the service process pertains to the fact whether the provider is using humor during the encounter with the customer. From previous studies it becomes clear that when humor is properly used it might have benefits for both provider and customer. Specifically, these studies indicate that in general the use of related humor results in more positive effects than the use of unrelated humor (Spotts et al., 1997; Zillman & Bryant, 1983).

It is well known that evaluations of services are based on what customers receive as outcome as well as on how the process of service delivery takes place (e.g., de Ruyter & Wetzels, 1998) and, therefore, in our study we focus on outcome in addition to process. Outcome refers to an evaluation of *what* the customer received from encounters with the firm, whereas process refers to *how* the outcome is performed. Outcome essentially refers to the instrumental performance of a service. It can be viewed as an end-state, which may or may not be the intended effect of a service process. For instance, when booking a holiday, the concept of service outcome pertains to the fact whether the provider is able to book the vacation or not.

Regarding the interplay between process and outcome, it has been frequently suggested in the services marketing literature that the way the service is delivered may be a more important antecedent of customer evaluations than the service outcome (e.g., Brown et al., 1989). Furthermore, Iacobucci et al. (1994) state that a favorable outcome might not increase the chance of positive evaluative judgments by customers, while a positive and favorable process may. Also, Bopp (1990) concludes that a good outcome may not be sufficient to foster perceptions of high service quality, satisfaction and loyalty. Swan and Comb (1976) found that customers become dissatisfied with a service when they perceive the outcome to be satisfactory but the process unsatisfactory. In addition, de Ruyter et al. (1998) showed that customers who experienced a favorable outcome and favorable process evaluated the service encounter more positively than customers who experienced a favorable outcome and an unfavorable process. Since related humor is supposed to be more positive than unrelated humor (e.g., Spotts et al., 1997; Zillman et al., 1983) and in line with service research, we hypothesize that:

H₁: A service encounter with a favorable outcome in which related humor is used will be evaluated more positively than a service encounter with a favorable outcome in which unrelated humor is used, in terms of a) satisfaction, b) enjoyable interaction, c) behavioral intentions.

It has been argued that particularly in the case of an unfavorable outcome, process variables are important determinants of evaluative judgments. For instance, Lytle & Mokwa (1992), in a study of medical encounters, demonstrated that when customers experienced an unsuccessful outcome, elements pertaining to the service process were considered important and significantly influenced evaluative judgements. In a retail context, Lemmink and Mattsson (1998) found that in case of non-delivery (e.g., an unfa-

avorable outcome), being pleasant and helpful still led to positive evaluations of the encounter. Lazare et al. (1975) report that the interaction of an unfavorable outcome and positive process perceptions may still result in a positive overall assessment of the service; a positive process seems to compensate for an unfavorable outcome. In line with this, it might be that a process with related humor (partly) makes up for an unfavorable outcome. Concerning the interaction between service outcome and type of humor in the service process, we hypothesize:

H₂: A service encounter with an unfavorable outcome in which related humor is used will be evaluated more positively than a service encounter with an unfavorable outcome in which unrelated humor is used, in terms of a) satisfaction, b) enjoyable interaction, c) behavioral intentions.

It has been suggested that humor with no apparent connection to the message and just included to entertain, might cause irritation. Unrelated humor may have a devastating effect on the perceptions of a provider's intelligence and may prompt appraisals of inferior informedness (Zillman et al., 1983). We argue that this effect might be especially strong in case of an unfavorable outcome. For example, in case a customer cannot make a reservation at a travel agency, while at the same time the service employee is just performing as the jolly entertainer, this might result in an extra negative evaluation. Therefore, we expect that the relative difference between a favorable outcome and an unfavorable outcome will be larger with the use of unrelated humor. We hypothesize:

H₃: The relative difference between service encounters with a favorable outcome and service encounters with an unfavorable outcome will be larger in case of unrelated humor than in the case of related humor, in terms of a) satisfaction, b) enjoyable interaction, c) behavioral intentions.

Finally, the service delivery mode might influence the relationship between the type of humor and the outcome of the service delivery, and the customers' evaluations of the service encounter. That is, it has been argued that consumers like on-line shopping when they are goal-focused and they like offline shopping when they want to enjoy the experience of being out (Wolfenbarger et al., 2001). Goal-focussed shoppers are transaction-oriented and consequently, the occurrence of the desired outcome may be more important than the type of humor. Experiential shoppers are searching for fun and consequently they might be more perceptive to and influenced by the type of humor than by the outcome. However, although there might be a difference in the importance of type of humor and the outcome, we still think the hypotheses will hold for both service delivery modes.

Next, the two experiments are described. We manipulated related and unrelated humor in both face-to-face and electronic encounters, but the stimuli used to manipulate type of humor are different for the two settings. For instance, whereas type of humor can be manipulated by the use of cartoons in electronic encounters, this is not possible face-to-face. Because these inevitable differences in the experimental situation inherent to two types of service delivery a comparison between the two modes within one analysis (e.g., 2x2x2 design) is not appropriate (Morkes, Kernal, and Nass 1999).

EXPERIMENT 1: FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTERS

Method

The setting of our experiment was the travel business. To determine an appropriate research setting, we choose a service that is well known in an off-line and on-line setting. The travel business was chosen for two reasons. First of all, almost everyone has experience with this service so respondents do not find it very difficult to imagine themselves in such a situation. Secondly, booking travel trips is a successful application of e-commerce. An experimental approach using a between-subjects, fixed-effects factorial design. Type of humor used by the provider was manipulated on two levels: (1) related and (2) unrelated humor. The outcome of the service interaction was manipulated on two levels: (1) favorable and (2) unfavorable outcome. Consequently, we arrived at a 2 x 2 factorial design.

Procedure

For the face-to-face encounter, we developed a video-scenario of a visit to a travel agency with the aim of booking a skiing holiday. Respondents viewed the video and were asked to imagine that they were the customer. This method has been proven to be useful in research (Lemmink et al., 1998).

The respondents were told that they had already informed themselves with the help of some travel brochures about the different possibilities, and made a priority list with which they went to the travel agency. The purpose of the video was to let the respondents experience the situation in order to test our hypotheses. We filmed the encounter in an existing travel agency to increase to realism of the video. For the role of service provider, we trained an actress to act as a travel agent, to use either related or unrelated humor, and to communicate the outcome. Regarding the use of related humor, the service provider made jokes and comic remarks related to the skiing holiday and in the unrelated condition jokes and comic remarks unrelated to skiing or any other aspect of the holiday were made. With respect to the outcome the trip could be booked (favorable) or could not be booked (unfavorable).

Four video films were composed based on the combination of the manipulated variables. In order to standardize the behavior of the service provider apart from the type of humor and outcome, a script was developed for the advisor and the customer for each encounter. These scripts were different for type of humor and service outcome, but the same for the other behaviors of the employee and the customer. The service provider in the video was talking to another person, e.g., an actress who played the role of customer. Only the customer's back was visible, to make it easier for the respondents to identify with the customer in the filmed service encounter and to enable to experience the encounter literally through the eyes of the customer. The respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. Each respondent received a booklet, which included an instruction and the questionnaire. Students were told to read the instruction and to watch the video. Next, they were asked to indicate their overall evaluation of the face-to-face encounter by rating the satisfaction, enjoyable interaction, and behavioral intention measures. Finally, demographic measures were presented (gender, age, and Internet experience).

Pre-test

Students (15) were selected for the pre-test. The subjects responded to a series of items assessing the validity of the manipulations immediately after exposure to the manipulation and were interviewed. The pre-test revealed that the manipulations were successful in creating the desired treatment effect. Only minor

TABLE 1
Results of Omnibus ANOVA Tests for the Face-to-Face Encounter

Dependent variables	Effect	F _{1,98}	p-value	Partial h ²
Satisfaction				
Main effects	Humor	44.99	<.001	.32
	Outcome	19.11	<.001	.16
Two-way interaction	Humor*outcome	.06	.809	.00
Enjoyable interaction				
Main effects	Humor	4.95	.028	.05
	Outcome	20.99	<.001	.18
Two-way interaction	Humor*outcome	1.11	.296	.01
Behavioral intention				
Main effects	Humor	58.52	<.001	.37
	Outcome	31.83	<.001	.25
Two-way interaction	Humor*outcome	3.38	.069	.03
Cell Means for the Face-to-Face Encounter				
		Related humor	Unrelated humor	
Favorable outcome		Satisfaction: 5.30 (1.13)	Satisfaction: 4.02 (.65)	
		Enjoyable interaction: 4.73 0(.86)	Enjoyable interaction: 4.50 (.74)	
		Behavioral intention: 5.19 0(.90)	Behavioral intention: 3.46 (.35)	
Unfavorable outcome		Satisfaction: 4.49 0(.66)	Satisfaction: 3.11 (.85)	
		Enjoyable interaction: 4.04 (1.08)	Enjoyable interaction: 3.40 (.86)	
		Behavioral intention: 3.83 0(.82)	Behavioral intention: 2.76 (.89)	

adaptations were necessary for the script. Furthermore, preliminary analyses indicated that the dependent measures showed sufficient reliability in terms of Cronbach’s alpha.

Sample

Hundred and two business students from a large Dutch University participated in our study. They received course credits for their participation. The sample consisted of 53% men and of 47% women. The age ranged from 19 to 24 (average of 22). Regarding Internet experience (years of use), 47% of all respondents has experience for 2-3 years, 27% between 4-5 years and 26% between 1-2 years.

Questionnaire Development

All items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale using ‘totally agree’ and ‘totally disagree’ as anchors. *Satisfaction* with the service encounter was operationalised by eight items as suggested by Oliver (1997). The five *enjoyable interaction* items were adapted from a scale developed by Gremler et al. (2000). The *behavioral intention* scale consisted of four items describing the customer’s intention to recommend the provider and to return to the travel agency. The items were measured using an existing scale developed by Oliver and Swan (1989). The items used for manipulation check were “In the situation put before you there is an element

of humor” and “In the situation put before you there is an element of humor which has nothing to do with a skiing holiday” for type of humor and “In the situation put before you a trip is booked” for outcome.

Results

From our manipulation checks, we can conclude that there are differences between the related humorous service process and the unrelated humorous service process ($F_{1,100}=76.81$; $p<.001$), and the favorable service outcome and the unfavorable service outcome ($F_{1,100}=922.22$; $p<.001$). The results of the ANOVA tests for the dependent variables and the cell means are presented in Table 1. We find that a service encounter with a favorable outcome in which related humor is used is evaluated more positively than a service encounter with a favorable outcome in which unrelated humor is used in terms of satisfaction and behavioral intentions (satisfaction: $t_{50}=4.73$; $p<.001$; behavioral intention: $t_{50}=9.40$; $p<.001$). Thus, for two out of the three evaluative criteria H_1 is supported.

In line with the relationship assumed under H_2 , we find that a service encounter with an unfavorable outcome in which related humor is used is evaluated more positively than a service encounter with an unfavorable outcome in which unrelated humor is used in terms of all evaluative criteria (satisfaction: $t_{48}=6.26$; $p<.001$; enjoyable interaction: $t_{48}=2.28$; $p=.029$; behavioral intention:

$t_{48}=4.50$; $p<.001$). Thus, for the face-to-face encounter H_2 is supported.

We would like to stress that the cell means we used to test H_1 and H_2 include both main effects and interactions effects. Since the interaction effect between type of humor and service outcome is not significant for all three dependent variables, the cell means can be interpreted as main effects. H_3 tests the presence of interaction effects (without including main effects) between type of humor and service outcome. Based on the results of the omnibus ANOVA tests we reject H_3 as there are no statistically significant interaction effects.

EXPERIMENT 2: ELECTRONIC ENCOUNTERS

Method

The setting and the design of experiment 2 were identical to that of experiment 1. The pre-tests (15 students) revealed that the manipulations were successful. Only minor adaptations were necessary and the dependent measures showed sufficient reliability. The effective sample size of this study is 114 respondents. The sample consisted of 45% men and of 55% women. Age ranged from 18 to 26 (average of 23). Fifty two percent has 2-3 years of Internet experience, 30% 4-5 years and 18% 1-2 years. All items were measured and operationalized as described in paragraph 4.5.

Procedure

The procedure was identical to that of Experiment 1. For the electronic encounters, the respondents surfed on a, for this study developed, web-site of a travel agency to book a skiing holiday. In the related humor condition, we included one cartoon about skiing to the web-site, a humorous, animated picture about snow and skiing, winter sport related funnies, and a joke of the day related to skiing. The unrelated humor web-site included a cartoon, an animated picture, funnies (like smileys), and a joke of the day which were not related to any aspect of the holiday. With respect to the service outcome, the respondent had to fill out a booking form and after submitting this form the respondent got the message that the holiday could be booked (favorable) or could not be booked (unfavorable). The use of cartoons and jokes to express humor was based on a review of humor research (e.g., Scott et al., 1990; Suls, 1972). Four web-sites were composed based on the combination of the manipulated variables.

Results

We found significant differences between the related humorous service process and the unrelated humorous service process ($F_{1,112}=43.25$; $p<.001$), and between the favorable service outcome and the unfavorable service outcome ($F_{1,112}=2491.60$; $p<.001$). The relationship stated under H_1 does not hold. We find no significant differences in evaluative criteria between respondents who experienced a service encounter with a favorable outcome in which related humor is used and respondents who experienced a service encounter with a favorable outcome in which unrelated humor is used. So, H_1 is rejected.

Concerning H_2 , we find small but statistically significant differences between the groups. In this case, respondents who experienced a service encounter with an unfavorable outcome in which related humor was used evaluate the service encounter more positively than respondents who experienced a service encounter with an unfavorable service outcome in which unrelated humor was used in terms of enjoyable interaction and behavioral intentions (enjoyable interaction: $t_{52}=2.72$; $p=.009$; behavioral intentions: $t_{52}=2.10$; $p=.042$). Consequently, we fail to reject H_2 for two out of

the three evaluative criteria. As described above, the cell means we used for the testing of H_1 and H_2 consist of both main and interaction effects. Since there is no significant main effect for type of humor, the differences between the cell means as found in testing H_2 can be interpreted as interaction effects.

Concerning H_3 , we find that there is a significant interaction effect (without including main effects) between type of humor and outcome for the variables enjoyable interaction ($F_{1,110}=6.06$; $p=.015$) and behavioral intentions ($F_{1,110}=4.88$; $p=.029$). The relative difference between service encounters with a favorable and an unfavorable outcome is smaller in terms of enjoyable interaction and behavioral intentions when related humor is used than when unrelated humor is used (see Figure 1).

DISCUSSION

This study was aimed at nuancing the intricate interplay between the type of humor used and the outcome of the service encounter in establishing customer's evaluations of face-to-face and electronic encounters. Various observations can be drawn from our results. Consistent with research on humor in the context of advertising and education (Spotts et al., 1997; Zillman et al., 1983), the results suggest that a related humor process increases the likelihood of a positive service evaluation by customers in a face-to-face encounter. With respect to the electronic encounters, we found that type of humor is not significant. This implies that there is no difference in effect for related and unrelated humor on customers' evaluations. Furthermore, in line with previous service research, we find that the outcome of the service is an important determinant of customers' evaluations in face-to-face encounters (e.g., Brown et al., 1989) as well as in electronic encounters.

In addition, it is found that the type of humor in a face-to-face encounter is more important than the outcome, whereas in electronic encounters, the outcome is more important than the type of humor. As suggested, this finding might have to do with the mode of service provision. As Wolfenbarger et al. (2001) suggest customers might prefer electronic encounters when they have a specific purpose in mind, and desire to purchase what they want quickly whereas they like offline shopping when they are driven by experiential and hedonic motives.

However, for enjoyable interaction a reverse result was found in the face-to-face encounter, i.e., outcome is more important than the type of humor. Gremler et al. (2000) state that enjoyable interaction is an assessment of the relational aspects of service. They suggest three strategies to achieve an enjoyable interaction; 1) relating to a customer's needs; 2) caring about the customer's service outcome; and/or 3) using humor to place the customer at ease. As it appears from our study, humor does not influence enjoyable interaction, though these other strategies might be of influence. The relative importance of outcome in our study may be an indication of the importance of the second strategy. Also, Johnson and Zinkhan (1991) demonstrate that service outcome may trigger affective reactions. Finally, with respect to the relatively small effect of type of humor on enjoyable interaction, it might well be that the sense of humor of the respondents has a moderating effect on this relationship. Previous studies have shown that various individual characteristics may differently determine humor's effectiveness (Moran et al., 1999). Kirsner (1997) describes how on-line service providers use humor to categorize users into particular types and delivers appropriate personalization on their web-site.

We failed to find interaction effects for the face-to-face encounter, e.g. type of humor and outcome do not strengthen or weaken each other in their effect on customers' evaluations. One explanation for the lack of these effects might be the type of service.

TABLE 2
Results of Omnibus ANOVA Tests for the Electronic Encounter

Dependent variables	Effect	F _{1,110}	p-value	Partial h ²
Satisfaction				
Main effects	Humor	2.36	<.127	.02
	Outcome	388.03	<.001	.78
Two-way interaction	Humor*outcome	2.45	<.120	.02
Enjoyable interaction				
Main effects	Humor	2.90	<.091	.03
	Outcome	180.89	<.001	.62
Two-way interaction	Humor*outcome	6.06	<.015	.05
Behavioral intention				
Main effects	Humor	3.18	<.077	.03
	Outcome	401.39	<.001	.79
Two-way interaction	Humor*outcome	4.88	<.029	.04
Cell Means for the Face-to-Face Encounter				
		Related humor	Unrelated humor	
Favorable outcome		Satisfaction: 5.89 (.75)	Satisfaction: 5.89 (.54)	
		Enjoyable interaction: 5.45 (.64)	Enjoyable interaction: 5.45 (.91)	
		Behavioral intention: 5.66 (.54)	Behavioral intention: 5.66 (.73)	
Unfavorable outcome		Satisfaction: 3.43 (1.98)	Satisfaction: 3.01 (.46)	
		Enjoyable interaction: 3.77 (1.87)	Enjoyable interaction: 3.15 (.61)	
		Behavioral intention: 2.95 (1.04)	Behavioral intention: 2.35 (.86)	

In the context of our study, a customer can effectively separate process and outcome evaluations, as the interpersonal and outcome elements of the travel service encounter are relatively distinct (as opposed to, for instance, medical services). Hence, it is possible for a customer to appreciate the process (e.g., related humor), but to rate the outcome negatively (and vice versa). While related humor is an important determinant of evaluative judgments in face-to-face encounters, it does not weaken the negative effect of an unfavorable outcome. Therefore, humor may be a value-added feature but may not be a substitute for outcome.

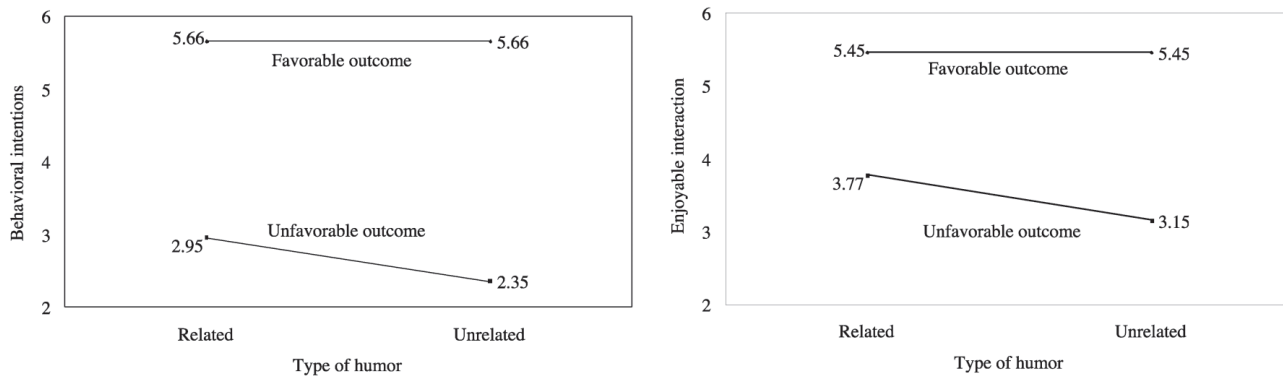
In electronic encounters, the effects of type of humor and outcome strengthen each other with respect to the customer's evaluative judgements. This suggests that the nature of the outcome of an encounter influences the way in which the humor is evaluated. The relative difference in enjoyable interaction and behavioral intentions between service encounters with a favorable outcome and an unfavorable outcome is smaller when related humor is used. This might indicate that related humor can partly compensate for an unfavorable service outcome. Therefore, although on-line customers may be likely focussed on the occurrence of a favorable outcome, in case of an unfavorable outcome, the use of related humor (compared to unrelated humor) may weaken the negative effect of the unfavorable outcome. It might be that because of the

unfavorable outcome, the customer focuses more on the site and its design, and the fun experience caused by the service-related comic strips and cartoons may create some positivity. In the same line of reasoning, we might conclude that in case of an unfavorable outcome the use of unrelated humor creates lower evaluative judgements than related humor. This might support research in the context of education which states that unrelated humor might cause annoyance (Hezel et al., 1982) and consequently magnifies the effects of an unfavorable outcome. It should be noted, however, that these patterns do not appear to apply to customer satisfaction. In other words, an unfavorable outcome lowers the customer's satisfaction and this effect can not be offset and/or will not be maximized by the type of humor used. Apparently, this type of customer evaluative judgment differs from the enjoyable interaction and behavioral intention criteria. So, in case of an unfavorable outcome, the customer is less satisfied, and the type of humor used does not influence this, but in these circumstances related humor does create a more enjoyable interaction and increase the intentions of the customer to return and to recommend the web-site.

Suggestions for Future Research

Several limitations to our research have to be recognized. These may point to future research issues. The first limitation

FIGURE 1
Graph for Enjoyable Interaction and Behavioral Intentions in Electronic Encounters



relates to our design. It pertains to a ‘laboratory experiment’ and consequently, the generalizability of the findings is limited with regards to settings outside the laboratory. Furthermore, the use of a scenario approach is subject to a possible lack of realism. Even though we built websites and used audio-visual scenarios which are more realistic than written scenario’s, it is easily conceivable that favorable and unfavorable outcomes will produce stronger emotional reactions in customers in a real-life setting compared to a simulation. While our scenario approach is valid for behavioral research purposes as the manipulation of the two outcome extremes enabled us to disentangle the influence of service outcome, future work may wish to explore perceptions of actual outcomes in a real-life setting.

The only process variable addressed in this study was type of humor. Other process variables, like the customization and responsiveness of the service provider, may be investigated in future research, since they might be important offline as well as online.

Also, future research should explore the issues introduced in our study over a broader set of services, as the focus was limited to the travel industry only. It may be that the impact of type of humor as well as output behaves differently depending on the type of service and an important question is whether the humor and outcome dimensions are significant in every service industry. For example, in our study it is possible to evaluate the outcome of the service accurately, but in case of experience and credence services this is much more difficult. Also, the measurement of personal characteristics such as sense of humor might yield a further insight into the relationships between the study variables.

Furthermore, based on advances in attribution theory (e.g., Meuter et al., 2000), it can be argued that customers’ inferences concerning the cause of an unfavorable outcome during encounters may considerably moderate service customer evaluations. For instance, in electronic encounters, s/he might interpret an unfavorable outcome caused by a server break-down differently from a non-availability of the product or service. Future research should take the impact of such attributions into account.

Also, more research is needed with respect to the determinants of enjoyable interaction. Gremler et al. (2000) suggest three strategies. Whereas we find that type of humor is hardly of influence, we find an indication of the importance of caring about the customer’s service outcome. However, we did not measure customers’ perceptions of these strategies directly. Therefore, an important contribution to the understanding of creating an enjoyable interaction could

be made by exploring the customers’ perceptions of these strategies. Future research also may investigate other dimensions of humor. In addition to related vs. unrelated humor, some research has focused on the relevance of humor. Relevant humor helps to make a critical point (Hezel et al., 1982). Although this distinction might be more useful in interactions with an instructional character, it might be important to services too. Finally, future research might include a no humor control group to more clearly show whether the results are being driven by related humor facilitating or unrelated humor inhibiting customers’ evaluations.

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Affective Expectations and Uncertainty Orientation: When do Affective Expectations Stop Influencing Affective Reactions?

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ABSTRACT

The Affective Expectations Model indicates that how much a person *thinks* they will enjoy an experience (affective expectation) is as important as what *actually happens* during the experience in determining his or her evaluation of the experience (affective reaction; Wilson, Lisle, Kraft, and Wetzel 1989). Affective expectations may also be used to re-interpret or selectively remember the experience (Klaaren, Hodges, and Wilson 1994). We propose that an individual's approach to uncertain situations may determine the role of affective expectations.

AFFECTIVE EXPECTATIONS

Klaaren Hodges, and Wilson (1994) propose three hypotheses to describe the role affective expectations play in an individual's willingness to repeat an activity. According to the *initial effects* hypothesis, the direct role of affective expectations ends with the evaluation of the experience, no additional effect occurs as time passes. The *reinterpretation hypothesis* suggests that people continue to reinterpret aspects of the experience that were inconsistent with expectations. The event becomes more expectation-consistent either by altering the meaning of features of the experience or by adjusting the importance of a feature of the experience. Memory for the facts does not change, but the interpretation of the facts does change. According to the *selective memory hypothesis* expectation-inconsistent aspects of the experience are less accessible than expectation-consistent aspects of the experience. Since expectation-consistent memories are more accessible, affective reactions become more expectation-consistent over time. The interpretation of the fact does not change, but the ability to remember the fact does change.

Each of the three explanations is plausible. We assert that the uncertainty orientation of the consumer may determine how, and to what extent, affective expectations influence affective reactions. We propose an uncertainty orientation framework that uses of locus of control to further divide Friedland's (1998) luck versus chance orientations. Friedland found that people consistently attribute outcomes to either luck or chance.

UNCERTAINTY ORIENTATION

Luck Orientation

Luck-oriented people pay little attention to probabilities that define the decision problem. They expect carryover from one random or independent event to another. Some luck-oriented people believe that luck is a stable internal force that will influence events in their favour (Darke and Freedman 1997). For example, some people believe they have an advantage betting at the track or playing poker machines because they are lucky. Other luck-oriented people believe luck comes and goes, but it can be detected (Friedland 1998; Wagenaar 1989). For example, if something goes well in the morning, it is an indication of a lucky day. The luck-oriented people that believe outcomes depend on the luck associated with individual involved are luck internals, luck-oriented people that believe that luck is determined by external factors are luck externals.

Chance Orientation

Chance-oriented people are likely to believe that the outcome will be the same regardless of the person involved. These people also expect that chance will distribute events evenly such that all possible outcomes will occur with equal frequency (Wagenaar 1989; Wagenaar and Keren 1988; Keren 1994; Friedland 1998). Some chance-oriented people believe that there is a pattern to uncertain outcomes: a stability in external probabilistic events. Consequently, they can improve the likelihood of guessing correctly by 'seeing' the pattern. Other chance-oriented people hold the more rational belief that there is no reliable process for predicting the outcome of uncertain events (Darke and Freedman 1997).

Uncertainty Orientation and Affective Expectations

Luck internals selectively remember events because the outcome is attributable to their own luck status. Chance internals reinterpret events to defend their belief that they skilled at predicting uncertain events. Luck externals believe outcomes can be predicted by the detection of lucky streaks. Since the outcome does not reflect personally on them, expectations will have little effect during or after the experience. Chance externals view the outcome in an uncertain setting as not predictable. They pay more attention to expectation-consistent information because they hope their expectations are met, but that is where the role of expectations ends.

EMPIRICAL WORK

Participants, 152 undergraduate students, read a story about going to a restaurant. They were given an initial impression of the restaurant (positive or negative). Participants provided their estimates of the likelihood of good service, good food and an enjoyable evening eventuating. The rest of the evening was described to them (positive, negative). Participants were asked three times to provide their evaluations of the events. After the description of the outcome, they were asked whether they would be likely to return to the restaurant, whether they would recommend the restaurant, and to provide their overall evaluation of the experience. Later, participants provided their memory for the overall evaluation and the facts of the experience. Uncertainty orientations were determined with a locus of causality scale and responses to luck/chance scenarios.

RESULTS

The results indicate that luck internals assimilated expectations into the evaluation of an experience, the likelihood of repeating and recommending an experience. This group changed their affective reactions over time, but not to be expectation-consistent as hypothesised, instead they altered their reaction to the experience to be more positive as time passed, regardless of the information they received before the experience. Correctly predicting the outcome was less important than defending the belief of having the good luck trait. This group selectively remembered expectation-consistent events occurring. The data supports the selective memory hypothesis.

Chance internals were the only group to shift their affective reactions over time to be more consistent with their initial expecta-

tions. This was expected because it allows them to assure themselves that they are skilled at using the signs to predict the pattern of chance outcomes. This group also reinterpreted the events to be more consistent with their expectations.

Chance externals assimilated expectations into the evaluation of an experience and their intention to recommend the restaurant to friends. Chance externals had the most accurate memory for the service encounter and memory for their evaluation of it. The data supports the initial effects explanation.

Luck externals did show some evidence of reinterpretation. Since this group is concerned with predicting when a good or bad streak of luck will begin or end, they may have re-interpreted the events to be consistent with their initial detection of luck.

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Resolving Goal Conflict: The Effect of Regulatory Focus on Product Choice

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Considerable research has examined how a single active goal directs consumer behavior (e.g. Huffman and Houston, 1993; Garbarino and Johnson, 2001). For example, a consumer with a goal to be healthy will choose healthy food, while a consumer with a goal to use convenience products will leave the grocery store toting plastic grocery bags. Very little research, however, has examined how multiple conflicting goals interact to direct consumer behavior. Why do we select fruit salad despite the high-fat delights that catch our eye? Why do we enjoy the convenience of a non-recyclable grocery bag when this convenience conflicts with our environment values? The difficulty in coordinating multiple goals is a fundamental challenge in everyday life. This paper extends a burgeoning area of research examining the effects of self-regulatory focus on goal pursuit (e.g. Shah et al., 1998; Aaker and Lee, 2001). We propose that a consumer's regulatory focus can predict his/her choice between two different products, which satisfy different activated goals at different levels of the goal hierarchy.

Consumer goals are believed to be organized in a hierarchical structure, with "high level" goals situated above "low level" goals (e.g. Carver and Scheier, 1990; Bagozzi and Deholakia, 1999; Huffman et al., 2000). High-level goals are described as goals that represent the core concept of self, such as a consumer's life themes and life values (e.g. being healthy, being protective of life). Low-level goals, on the other hand, describe goals that are detailed and function-oriented, such as a consumer's desired product features and benefits sought (e.g. eating flavorful food, using a convenient shopping bag). High-level goals and low-level goals can be differentiated in two important respects. First, high-level goals are *abstract* while low-level goals are *concrete*. Second, high-level goals are *long-term* and accessible across many situations while low-level goals are *short-term* and constantly shaped by situational cues. The abstractness and temporal dimension of a goal are the two most important determinants as to whether a goal is at a high-level or at a low-level in the goal hierarchy (Austin and Vancouver, 1996; Huffman et al., 2000).

Interestingly, the abstract and temporal dimensions also distinguish between two different self-regulatory styles—promotion focus and prevention focus. Individuals with a promotion focus tend to think in an *abstract* way while individuals with a prevention focus tend to think in a *concrete* way (Liberman et al., 1999; Roese et al., 1999). Moreover, individuals with a promotion focus tend to focus on *long-term plans* while individuals with a prevention focus tend to focus on *immediate actions* (Freitas et al., 2002; Pennington and Roese, 2003). So although any goal can be pursued with either a promotion focus or a prevention focus (e.g. you can pursue the goal of having a healthy lifestyle by seeking out healthy foods or by avoiding unhealthy foods), goals at different hierarchical levels may be more consistent with one or the other regulatory pattern.

Based on the parallels observed between high level and low level goals and promotion and prevention focus regulatory styles, we predict that a promotion-focus will be associated more with the pursuit of high-level than low level goals, whereas a prevention-focus will be associated more with the pursuit of low-level than high level goals. To illustrate, in the opening examples, "being healthy" and "being protective of life" are high-level goals; "eating flavorful food" and "using convenience products" are low-level goals. We predict that in these goal conflict scenarios, consumers with a

promotion focus will be more likely to reject the non-recyclable bag and order fruit salad than those with a prevention focus, for whom we predict the converse will be true.

To test our predictions, we created a situation where participants have conflicting goals at different levels. To achieve this, we wanted to first identify participants with the same high-level goal and then, we placed them in a situation where they were given a conflicting low-level goal. They were asked to choose between two products. Each product would satisfy only one goal, but not the other.

Our study was conducted in two sessions. In the first session, we used a modification of the procedure designed by Ratneswar and colleagues (2001) to identify high-level consumer goals. The procedure was modified by first spending a considerable amount of time explaining the concept of high-level goals to participants. Every day examples of high-level goals were presented and questions were encouraged. Participants were then asked to list the high-level goal that came to mind when they thought about the type of food they *liked, disliked, sought and avoided* and record their answers on in a set of six stapled index cards (two of the six cards were distracters and did not ask about food-related behaviors). A score reflecting the most salient high-level goal was calculated for each participant. "Being healthy" was found to be the most popular high-level goal. Participants who have this goal when they think about food were identified and invited to participate in the second session one week later.

In the second session, participants with a salient high-level goal of "being healthy" were randomly assigned to either a promotion or a prevention focus prime condition. Regulatory focus was primed using a maze task (Friedman and Forster, 2001). Participants were then asked to imagine that they had been walking in the sun for 20 minutes on a very hot summer's day. This manipulation implicitly evoked the low-level goal of cooling off. We then pit the high level goal to be healthy against the low level goal to cool off by offering participants a choice between two different snacks: an apple or ice cream. A pretest revealed that ice cream was viewed as satisfying the goal of cooling off, but not satisfying the goal of being healthy. An apple, on the other hand, was good for one's health, but did not satisfy the goal to cool off.

As expected, the results indicated that participants primed with a promotion focus were more likely to choose the apple, while participants primed with a prevention focus were more likely to choose the ice cream. An analysis of participants' thoughts while making the choices provided further support for the predicted association between consumers' regulatory focus and consumers' goal orientation. As expected, participants primed with a promotion focus generated more thoughts centered on the high-level goal while those with a prevention focus generated more thoughts centered on the low-level goal. The results also indicated that there were no differences between participants primed with a promotion focus and those primed with a prevention focus in their attitudes toward both ice cream and apples. Consequently, the differences in choices were not mediated by differences in attitudes.

Our data clearly indicate that when both a high-level and a low-level goal are activated, but cannot be satisfied by a single product, consumers with a promotion focus tend to choose a product that satisfies the high-level goal whereas consumers with a prevention focus tend to choose a product that satisfies the low-

level goal. These findings suggest that a consumer's regulatory focus can predict their product choice when two different products each will satisfy a different activated goal.

This paper also extends recent developments on the *Compatibility Principle* identified in the regulatory focus research. Our findings suggest that *compatibility* may not just be due to the congruity between regulatory focus and information framing (Aaker and Lee, 2001; Lee et al., 2000, Lee and Aaker, 2004), but may also be related to the goal level that is most salient during the decision-making process. Specifically, a promotion focus is more compatible with high-level consumer goals whereas a prevention focus is more compatible with low-level consumer goals. Furthermore, our findings also indicate that regulatory focus can have a direct influence on consumers' product choice, without being mediated by consistent attitude changes (Aaker and Lee, 2001).

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ROUNDTABLE
Trust in Consumer Behavior Research
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The roundtable produced a lively discussion among 28 consumer researchers who have an active interest in trust and/or who hoped to learn more about it. We began by reference to a literature search conducted using the key words “trust” and “consumer” which resulted in a list of just six articles in the top marketing journals, only one of which appeared in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. Given this dearth of published research on trust and consumers, the first question was “what is the role of trust in consumer behavior?”

However, it was proposed that before we can suggest avenues within consumer behavior for the study of trust, we as a field need to first define what we mean by the term. Currently, there exists no agreed-upon definition of trust, and those that exist can be classified into (at least) four categories: trust as a belief, an expectation, an intention, and a behavior. Furthermore, it was suggested that as a field, we need to define trust and be explicit in its usage and measurement, if we are to advance our knowledge of the concept. For example, one researcher discussed that, although definitions of terms in economics may seem limiting and oversimplified, it is because of the parsimony of definition and the consensus in the field as to its usage, that research and understanding of core constructs advances. This is in contrast to the current state in marketing in which we are in a situation of finding conflicting results concerning trust, depending on the definition of trust employed. The perception among some of those assembled was that unless we are able to agree on what we mean by trust, research in this area will keep moving in circles—with collections of disparate definitions and results, rather than achieving a deeper level of insight.

However, this view was countered by other participants who believed that to decide on a single definition of trust would be a gross error of oversimplification because trust inherently takes on different meanings depending on the length, context, and relationship participants involved.

The discussion then moved to the multifaceted characteristic of trust, and its role in different stages of relationships. For example, whereas trust may be weighted more on Williamson-like expectations early on in a relationship, in the later stages of relationships between marketers and clients or consumers, the bond of trust possibly becomes a key aspect in “commercial friendships.” Furthermore, it was proposed that the propensity for consumers to believe advertisements may be related to general trust tendencies. Finally, we discussed whether the standard definition of trust used within the channels literature—that of “a belief in one’s honesty or benevolence”—is applicable in consumer contexts, and furthermore, whether the two conditions often described as necessary for the existence of trust—risk and interdependence—always exist in interactions with consumers—which often occur between consumers and an anonymous entity, company, or brand.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Consumer Biases In Estimations of Product Quantity, Distance, and Currency Value

Pierre Chandon, INSEAD

Brian Wansink, University of Illinois

Consumers regularly perform lower-order quantifying judgments about quantity, distance, and value and biases in these estimations can influence a wide spectrum of consumption and purchase decisions. Errors in inventory estimates can bias in-home consumption decisions and in-store purchase timing and quantity decisions (Chandon and Wansink 2000, Chandon and Wansink 2002). Errors in distance estimation can bias home purchasing, shopping, and traveling decisions (Raghubir and Krishna 1996). Inaccurate evaluations of unfamiliar currencies can influence spending behavior and perceptions of transaction value (Raghubir and Srivastava 2002).

The objective of this special session is to present recent studies showing how all these estimations rely on a reduced number of psychophysical principles (e.g., Stevens' power law), decision heuristics (e.g., the anchoring and adjustment, the availability, and the numerosity heuristics), and statistical phenomena (e.g., the regression principle). In aggregate, these three papers provide evidence for systematic biases in three important estimation decisions, in-home product inventory level, value of foreign currencies, and length of direct and indirect paths. They also examine the processes, mediating mechanisms, moderators, and boundary conditions of these biases. In doing so, they re-introduce important findings and methods from sensory psychophysics to the consumer research community.

This session first examines the basic foundations of consumer biases in quantifying judgments. Chandon and Wansink's research, titled "Quantity and Salience Biases in Inventory Estimation," provides a foundation for this session by developing a quantity-salience model of inventory estimation that builds on sensory psychophysics research, signal detection theory, and the heuristics and biases literature. It does show, it shows how inventory estimates are systematically biased, how they influence consumption behavior, and how product quantity and perceptual salience influence these estimation biases.

The second research, by Dilip Soman, Klaus Wertenbroch, and Amitava Chattopadhyay, examines the impact of currency numerosity (e.g., high versus low nominal values) on the perceived value of transactions when people are working with unfamiliar currencies (e.g., the Euro). This research nicely complements the first presentation by showing how rescaling the measurement unit by reducing or increasing the nominal value of a quantity influences quantity estimations (e.g., measuring quantity in servings vs. weigh). It also takes into account the impact of rescaling not only on the target evaluation (e.g., the transaction expressed in the new currency), but also on the reference level (e.g., income). The research finds that consumers evaluate the numerosity of the nominal difference between the price of the transaction and the reference standard and not the ratio. This results in underspending when the new (target) currency is less numerous than the original (base currency) and overspending when the new currency is more numerous than the original one.

The third presentation, by Aradhna Krishna, examines the boundaries of estimation biases by studying the extent to which they are automatic or controllable. Her research looks at the direct distance bias, according to which paths with a shorter direct distance between end-points are estimated to be shorter than paths with a longer direct distance (the direct distance of paths varies

either due to the *angularity* between path segments or due to the paths *retracing* versus being unidirectional). She shows that the retracing bias is not moderated by people's preference for visual versus verbal styles of processing, but is moderated by their visual ability, such that individuals with higher *visualizing ability* rely less on direct distance. Her findings also rule out *motivation* as a control mechanism by showing that both the angularity and retracing biases persist even when people are highly motivated and when they believe that direct distance is an *unreliable estimator* of actual distance. These results are consistent with those of Chandon and Wansink showing that consumers are unaware of their estimation biases, which explains why they have not been able to learn from their past errors.

INDIVIDUAL PAPER ABSTRACTS

"Quantity and Salience Biases in Inventory Estimation"

Pierre Chandon, INSEAD

Brian Wansink, University of Illinois

Inventory estimations are performed frequently and influence consumption, purchase timing, and purchase quantity decisions. In this research, we examine three questions: 1) How are inventory estimates biased? 2) Do biases in inventory estimation influence consumption? and 3) How do product quantity and perceptual salience bias inventory estimation? Building on the psychophysical literature on quantifying judgments, we propose a quantity-salience model that examines how biases change across different levels of inventory quantity and perceptual salience. In the absence of different pay-offs for different biases (such as overestimating or underestimating), we build an asymmetric quantity-salience model of inventory estimation bias and test it under different contexts in six field studies and lab experiments.

In doing so, a number of conceptual contributions are made. This research extends the psychophysical literature by showing that quantity estimations exhibit an *asymmetric contraction bias*—whereby low levels of inventory are slightly overestimated and high levels of inventory are strongly underestimated, and that this bias is stronger when products are not perceptually salient. Second, we model the relationship between estimated and actual quantities (as opposed to simply testing for differences at some pre-determined levels using ANOVAs). This enables us to measure the magnitude of the quantity and salience biases for any level of inventory, and not only at a few pre-determined levels and to use model parameters to derive contraction indices enabling comparisons and generalizations across multiple product categories. Third, we provide support for two explanations of the quantity and salience biases. We show that quantity biases can be due to consumers anchoring on average inventory level and failing to adjust, and that salience biases can be caused by the higher availability of perceptually salient products. Finally, we show that consumers are aware of the effects of salience on their estimations (but unable to correct them) and completely unaware of the effects of quantity.

The presentation is organized as follows. We first review the literature on biases in quantifying judgments to derive two competing models of quantity biases (Poulton 1989; Stevens 1986). On the one hand, signal detection theory would predict an *expansion bias*, i.e., consumers underestimating low inventory levels to avoid stock

outs and overestimating high inventory levels to avoid overstocking. However, we predict that in the absence of clear payoffs for different types of estimation errors, inventory estimations will exhibit an asymmetric *contraction* bias, according to which consumers slightly overestimate low quantities and strongly underestimate high quantities. We also predict that the contraction bias will be smaller for perceptually salient products, which are easier to recall.

We test the quantity-salience model of consumer inventory estimation through six studies. The first three studies examine the quantity biases by collecting inventory estimates and actual inventory levels for 23 different products and 344 adult consumers. Study 1 establishes the basic finding of an asymmetric contraction bias with eight product categories. Study 2 replicates the asymmetric contraction bias with eight new categories and 100% response rate. Study 3 further documents the robustness of the asymmetric contraction effect with high non-countable levels of inventory measured in ounces. Study 4 is a field experiment, which shows that people with a tendency to overestimate their inventories consume stockpiled products faster than people who underestimate inventories. Study 5 is a laboratory study, which experimentally manipulates perceptual salience and inventory levels and shows how both internal and external anchors predictably bias inventory estimations. Study 6 examines how salience and quantity bias inventory estimations by influencing, respectively, the likelihood of recalling the product, and the quantity estimates given that the product has been recalled.

“Currency Numerosity Effects on the Perceived Value of Transactions”

Dilip Soman, University of Toronto

Klaus Wertenbroch, INSEAD

Amitava Chattopadhyay, INSEAD

Market transactions require individuals to make decisions about the monetary value of the goods or services to be exchanged. Shafir, Diamond, and Tversky (1997) showed that people rely on the nominal value of money rather than on its real value when making such decisions. In particular, the face value of an amount of money (in dollars) influenced consumer preferences to a greater extent than the purchasing power of that amount (accounting for interest and inflation). This focus on nominal rather than real value when making economic decisions was described in the economics literature over 70 years ago by Fisher (1928), who coined the term ‘money illusion’ to describe it. The economics literature has focused on delineating possible macro-economic implications of money illusion. The scant experimental research on money illusion has documented its existence and implications (Fehr and Tyran 2001). Less attention has been paid so far to the psychological processes that cause money illusion. Shafir et al. (1997) suggested that money illusion arises because people find it easier to think in nominal rather than real terms. Similarly, Raghubir and Srivastava (2002) proposed that consumers anchor on, and insufficiently adjust for, the face value of foreign prices when they convert these foreign prices into prices in their home currency. Their conceptualization of money illusion in terms of anchoring and adjustment processes applies to comparisons between currencies, subject to an exchange rate.

We attempt to shed more light on the psychological processes, through which money illusion operates in general. We present a theory and evidence of currency numerosity effects on the perceived value of transactions. Numerosity effects occur when consumers use the number of units into which a given stimulus is divided rather than the size of each unit in evaluating quantity

(Pelham, Sumarta, and Myaskovsky 1994). In line with standard consumer choice theory, we propose that consumers evaluate transactions vis-à-vis salient reference standards, such as a budget or the price of a competing product. However, consumers deviate from standard theory by evaluating the numerosity of the nominal difference between that reference standard and the price of the transaction in order to estimate the real value of that transaction. We test these predictions in six experiments.

Studies 1 and 2 show that consumer preferences and willingness to pay for products and services that are priced in different currencies depend on the nominal rather than the real value of the posted prices. These results are consistent with our theory but also replicate recent findings by Raghubir and Srivastava (2002). Importantly, we did not vary participants’ nominal budget in studies 1 and 2. To more specifically test the predictions of our theory, studies 3 and 4 then showed that Raghubir and Srivastava’s (2002) effect of the nominal value of prices reverses when budgets are also varied in nominal terms. These findings demonstrate that consumers evaluate transactions in line with the numerosity of the difference between budgets and prices (an approximate measure of their purchasing power), extending previous theorizing on money illusion. Similarly, study 5 showed under incentive-compatible conditions that, holding the real expected value of the bet constant, participants real willingness to bet increases with the numerosity of the difference between nominal budgets and nominal willingness to bet, again contrary to what Raghubir and Srivastava’s (2002) anchoring and adjustment mechanism predicts. Finally, study 6 applied our theory to comparisons of prices of competing products instead of prices and budgets, demonstrating that the perceived price premium of national brands over store brands shrinks the less numerous the nominal difference is between the two types of brands. Specifically, the choice share of national brands vis-à-vis store brands was higher when prices were posted in (less numerous) Euros than in (more numerous) Pesetas.

Our findings add to the fledgling literature on the psychological processes underlying money illusion by providing evidence that consumer evaluations of transactions are driven by the numerosity of the nominal difference between prices and reference standards that are salient in the evaluation context. Our findings qualify the conclusions from existing research about the role of anchoring on the face value of nominal prices in evaluating products in foreign currencies. Our reversal of the effect of numerosity on price perceptions when reference standards are salient suggests that money illusion can be explained within the framework of standard consumer choice theory (e.g., Deaton and Muellbauer 1980). Consumers evaluate transactions against their budget but they assess their purchasing power by judging the numerosity of the nominal difference between prices and budgetary or other reference standards, that is, by the number of units, into which that difference is divided.

“The Automatic and Controlled Components of Visual Perception: Examining Moderators of the Direct Distance Bias”

Aradhna Krishna, University of Michigan

Visual cues are a highly salient, vivid and strong input to many decisions. On occasion, the use of such visual cues leads to systematically biased judgments. The purpose of this paper is to examine whether such biases are controllable or automatic. We do so by examining the moderating effects of individual differences in visual imagery ability, preferences for visual versus verbal styles of processing, accuracy motivation, and de-biasing on the direct distance bias. The direct distance bias is a perceptual bias based on

visual cues, in which paths with a shorter direct distance between end-points are estimated to be shorter than equally long paths with a longer direct distance.

Given that the use of direct distance as a source of information leads to biased judgments, we identify conditions under which consumers can make more accurate judgments. If the direct distance bias is controllable, then factors such as de-biasing and training, or increasing accuracy motivation should attenuate the use of this heuristic in distance judgments. On the other hand, if the direct distance cue is used as an initial anchor in an automatic manner, then such factors may be ineffective at controlling the bias. Instead, factors that attenuate the attention paid to the direct distance heuristic may be more effective at controlling the bias.

Study 1 investigates the effect of individual differences in visual information processing ability. The study is based on earlier research proposing that chronic imagery vividness may attenuate the effects of vivid and salient information. We look at situations where subjects are given visual/pictorial information, and are asked to estimate distance in feet—a ratio scaled measure with an external accuracy criterion. We find that individual preferences for visual versus verbal processing do not reduce reliance on direct distance as a source of information to make distance judgments. In contrast, individuals with more vivid imagery ability are less likely to be prone to the direct distance bias.

The next two studies examine the role of contextual interventions designed to make subjects disregard the use of direct distance as a source of information. Study 2 examines the role of motivation. Typically, more normative processing of information can be encouraged under higher accuracy motivation conditions, for example, by increasing the stakes involved in making a more accurate decision. However, if one or more of the inputs used to make a decision are used in a non-conscious manner, outside of awareness, then respondents may not consciously be able to reduce their reliance on them. Further, if the use of such inputs is uncontrollable, then respondents may be unable to reduce their reliance on them. We find that the direct distance bias persists even when subjects are highly motivated. This pattern is consistent with the definition of uncontrollability of an effect. If the effect was controllable, higher motivation to be accurate should have led to an attenuation of the effect, even if it persisted in the high motivation condition.

Finally, Study 3 examines whether reliance on direct distance reduces when it is perceived to be an unreliable estimator of distance. Classic de-biasing techniques in the social judgment arena have shown that increasing people's attention to the biasing nature of a stimulus and encouraging them to use alternate sources of information for making a judgment lead to an attenuation of the bias. Again, this argument presupposes that if the use of the input is outside awareness, bringing it within awareness will lead to normatively appropriate processing. Increasing awareness of the biasing nature of a stimulus on a judgment and encouraging disregard of it should be extremely successful strategies if biases are consciously controllable. If they are uncontrollable, then de-biasing as a strategy may not be effective. We find that the bias persists even when subjects believe direct distance is an unreliable estimator of actual distance. This adds to the evidence that the bias is due to an inability to ignore the perceptually salient direct distance information.

We conclude that the use of direct distance due to its perceptual salience is "automatic," in as much as it appears to be uncontrollable, except when people are less likely to attend to it—while it can be reduced under some conditions, it is near impossible to eliminate. In the presentation, our three studies will be described, followed by a discussion of theoretical implications of our research.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Language Processing, Affect, and Cognition: Word and Sentence Structure Effects Across Languages

David Luna, Baruch College

While language is ubiquitous in marketing and advertising, consumer research on language processing is still in its infancy. This session examined different aspects of how the structure of language influences the effectiveness of brand names and advertising copy. The study of language processing is crucial to understand the influence of advertising and brand naming on both affect and cognition. The research presented here aims to provide an appreciation of the effect of language structure on cognition and persuasion, particularly when targeting linguistically diverse markets.

The three studies by Yorkston and de Mello opened the session investigating the linguistic structure of brand names. Their research extends previous research on the linguistic features of brand names (e.g., Zhang and Schmitt 2001) by examining the influence of gender on brands. The studies suggest that it is not only important to consider the properties of the brand name itself (e.g., familiarity, gender), but that gender congruity between the brand and its product class must also be considered when designing brand names.

The study by Lerman also investigates the structure of brand names. The author considers the role of a brand's linguistic components on brand attitudes and other measures of brand processing. In particular, the results suggest that familiarity of brand morphemes (the smallest meaning units in language) impacts brand name preference. Lerman's research has profound implications for brand name development.

The five studies by Luna, Peracchio and Lerman investigate language at a different level. While the other two presentations focused on morphology (meaning creation within a single word or brand name), this paper examined language in sentences, and suggest that sentence structure in a slogan (i.e., its syntax) also impacts affect and cognition, especially when consumers are paying attention to the language of the ad.

Each of the presentations had a cross-linguistic dimension which is relevant to the growing diversity of consumer markets. Lerman explained that morphemic familiarity has opposite effects for native and non-native speakers. Yorkston and de Mello showed that different languages (i.e., Spanish and English) assign gender in different ways to brand names, not necessarily following the linguistic norms used to assign gender to other nouns. Luna, Peracchio, and Lerman suggested that there are structural and social constraints governing the use of mixed-language ads, a practice increasingly used in ethnic and cross-over marketing.

The contributions for consumer research are manifold. Each of the presentations is firmly grounded on linguistic theory and contributes to the small but growing corpus of research on psycholinguistics in consumer research. Also, while brand research has often focused on the nature of the psychological associations to a brand, it has often neglected how linguistic factors may influence brand name success. Additionally, the presentation on codeswitching provided a framework for researchers interested in this widespread practice, not only in ethnic marketing but also in cross-over advertising, targeting mainstream consumers.

“Sex Sells? The Effects of Gender Marking on Consumers’ Evaluations of Branded Products Across Languages”

Eric Yorkston, University of Southern California

Gustavo de Mello, University of Southern California

Brand names identify and distinguish products and are often considered the single most valuable asset a corporation possesses. Names can work together with the package graphics to communicate the product's position and image. A brand name can be designed to convey excitement, elegance, exclusiveness, and other qualities that influence the consumers' perceptions and attitudes. Good brands can evoke feelings of trust, confidence, security, strength, durability, and status. The brand name chosen for a new product can affect the brand's image, shape brand-knowledge structures, and play an important role in brand-equity formation.

In many cases brand names provide information about the product explicitly through the semantic meanings incorporated in the brand name (e.g. Windex is a product to be used upon windows). It is also possible for brand names to implicitly cue attitudes or information toward the brand through structural factors of the name itself. For example, the phonetic sounds comprising a name can influence attribute perceptions or even trigger cultural stereotypes (LeClerc, Schmitt & Dubé 1994; Yorkston 2004).

In this paper, we examine gender markers, an inherent aspect of language that implicitly affects both brand attitude formation and brand encoding. Languages assign objects to different gender classes. Members of a gender class then systematically modify other parts of speech, such as pronouns, articles, adjectives, and verbs. Depending upon the language, gender is assigned by using either semantic or formal rules. In semantic gender classifications, the meanings and properties of the object determine a word's gender. In a formal gender classification, the properties of the word instead of the properties of the represented object determine the gender. Therefore, in language, gender can act as both a classification scheme for objects as well as the agreement cue for an object's referents.

Our objectives in this paper are three-fold. First, we examine the theoretical basis for the gender classification of brand names in language. We demonstrate that brand names do not acquire gender in a similar manner to objects in a language, but instead acquire gender similarly to how an individual's name would acquire gender. Second, we demonstrate the effect that a brand name's gender can have upon consumers' judgments of a brand in a product class. Third, we provide evidence suggesting that gender (dis)agreement between brand names and products affects encoding and storage of the product's information. Stated simply, we investigate some of the consequences a gender system may have on attitude formation and brand name encoding in a brand context. In addition, we examine how the differential role of gender across languages can moderate these effects.

In Study 1, we examine the role gender classes play in product evaluations in English, a language with a semantic assignment system. English has a relatively weak gender system (i.e. there are very few semantic rules and very little agreement across parts of speech). We show that consumers readily break from the structured rules and assign non-neutral genders to both product classes and to brand names. Further, the interaction of these gender assignments

can affect judgments about the product wherein consumers bestow higher evaluations upon products with congruent genders between product class and brand name. Even more interestingly, English speakers demonstrate a remarkable flexibility in the manner in which they break the rules of gender assignment. While product classes follow semantic assignment rules, the assignment of gender to fictitious, meaningless, brand names appears to follow formal assignment rules.

In Study 2, we extend the analysis of the role gender classes play in English. Using the insights garnered from Study 1, we more systematically examine how gender markers affect product evaluation. We demonstrate that when the formally assigned gender of the brand name is congruent with the semantically assigned gender of the product class, individuals have more positive attitudes and elicit higher purchase intentions toward the brand. In addition, we provide support for our hypothesis that the primary purpose of semantic gender systems is to provide cues regarding object meaning and not to facilitate language processing. There is little direct evidence of processing interference caused by brand name/product class gender incongruencies.

Study 3 replicates the procedure of our second study, this time with a population where the primary language is Spanish, a language with a formal assignment system. Since product classes may have differing formal and semantic gender classifications in Spanish, we examine how these two classifications interact with a brand name's assigned gender. We find that while gender is formally assigned to objects in Spanish, the gender of brand names is semantically assigned in congruence to the product class. Additionally, it is this congruency that has the greater effect upon a brand's evaluation. We also report the counterintuitive finding that gender effects upon brand evaluations appear to be weaker in Spanish than in English, even though Spanish possesses a stronger gender system (i.e. words are more often assigned via specific rules and more parts of speech agree with an object's gender). We posit that since formal gender systems rely less upon semantic meanings in gender assignment, and evaluating a product and brand name relies heavily on a brand's associated meanings, gender associations are less likely to be applied to brand evaluations in a formal system. Finally, we demonstrate that gender matching plays a significant role in brand name encoding. Not only are there significant differences in recall based upon product gender/brand gender congruency, but mismatching brand name and product gender inhibits brand name recognition.

This research expands upon the recent literature that demonstrates the importance of examining individual linguistic components when developing a brand name. Additionally, by examining this cross-cultural phenomenon, we present an interesting example of how multi-national companies must not only be concerned with explicit cultural differences, but also with an implicit understanding of the language when taking their brands across borders.

“You Say Tomato and I Say Tomato: Native and Non-Native Language Processing of Novel Brand Names”

Dawn Lerman, Fordham University

The translation of brand names poses challenges to marketers operating internationally. One often-cited example is the marketing of the Chevy Nova in Mexico, where “no va” means “it doesn't go.” However, such challenges are not limited to brands marketed across countries. For example, Spanish-speakers within the United States may have made the same association. Of course, bilingualism complicates the issue. Depending on the language system used to process the name (i.e., Spanish or English), the Nova name may or may not have evoked negative brand associations among Spanish-

English bilinguals. The purpose of this paper is to investigate such language influences by comparing brand name evaluations of monolingual versus bilingual consumers.

Consumers draw on language knowledge stored in the lexicon to process brand names. When the Hydrovive brand of shampoo was first introduced in the United States, for example, English speakers were able to draw on their knowledge of phonemes (i.e., sound) to read and pronounce the name and their knowledge of morphology to make associations to the name (i.e., hydro relating to water or moisture and vive relating to life). Even when names are non-words that are not composed of known morphemes (e.g., Exxon, Xerox), consumers may apply their lexical knowledge to pronounce the name and perhaps derive some meaning from the name based on phonetic symbolism (Klink 2001). Research suggests, however, that consumers are unlikely to apply their lexical knowledge to highly novel verbal stimuli (Durso and Shore 1991). Thus, English-speaking consumers might have been reluctant to try to say “Häagen Dazs” aloud when this brand was first introduced because the name includes an umlaut and the letter combinations violate English word formation rules.

Whereas novel brand names can only activate lexical knowledge of a single language for monolinguals, they may activate lexical knowledge of more than one language for bilinguals. Although fluent bilinguals process words in their non-native language directly (as opposed to using corresponding words in their native language; Chen and Leung 1989), they should be able to draw upon this broader language knowledge when it may be helpful to do so. Presumably, then, they should have greater linguistic flexibility in processing brand names than do monolinguals. This flexibility is evident in the supposed ease of learning a third language once having learned a second language (Oldin 1989).

Linguistic flexibility among bilinguals is made possible through language transfer, or more specifically, substratum transfer. Substratum transfer refers to the influence of the native language on a subsequently learned language (Oldin, 1989). Although the effects of substratum transfer are most evident in pronunciation (Thomason 1981), such transfer also occurs at the morphological level (Ard and Homberg 1983). While substratum transfer can certainly aid brand name processing, the potential also exists for it to hinder processing. The consumer's pronunciation of the brand name may, for example, diverge from the norm among native speakers of that language (Oldin 1989). The resulting mispronunciation often results from the activation of phonological codes according to the grapheme-phoneme (i.e., spelling-sound) correspondences of both the target language and the native language (Brysbart, Van Dyck, and Van de Poel 1999). Non-native speakers may also hear phonemic contrasts when none exist in that language or miss such contrasts when they do (Lieberman, Harris, Hoffman, and Griffith 1957).

In this study, an experiment is conducted to examine the use of lexical knowledge among native (monolinguals) and non-native (bilinguals) English-speakers in the processing of novel brand names and the effect of such knowledge on brand name evaluations. Brand name novelty was manipulated by exposing respondents to one of two novel brand names, a novel name composed of English language morphemes and a novel non-morphemic name. It was hypothesized that an interaction between morphemic (un)familiarity of the name (morphemically familiar, morphemically unfamiliar) and language background (monolingual, bilingual) would exist.

Consistent with expectations, the results revealed stark differences between native and non-native English speakers in perceptions of and attitudes toward morphemically familiar and unfamiliar brand names. Overall, the results indicate a clear advantage of morphemically familiar names over morphemically unfamiliar

names among native speakers whereas the reverse generally appears true for non-native speakers. For example, among native speakers, morphemically familiar names appear more distinctive and more likeable but no easier to pronounce than morphemically unfamiliar names. In contrast, morphemically unfamiliar names appear to perform better than morphemically familiar names on distinctiveness, attitudes, and purchase intentions among non-native speakers.

The differences in perception and attitudes among native and non-native speakers present additional challenges for companies operating in bilingual communities. Previous research suggests that the use of a consumer's native versus non-native language in advertising can influence attitudes toward the ad and toward the corporate sponsor (Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone, 1994). The present study offers evidence for such (non)native language effects on perceptions of and attitudes toward both the brand name and the brand. The managerial implications of these differences are discussed along with a number of alternative courses of action that marketers may consider depending on the language background of their target market.

“A Theory-Based Examination of Language Switching in Advertising to Bilingual Consumers”

David Luna, Baruch College

Laura Peracchio, University of Wisconsin

Dawn Lerman, Fordham University

Bilingualism is an important phenomenon considering that most of the world's population speaks more than one language (Grosjean 1982). The lack of research explicitly addressing how bilinguals process marketing messages is therefore surprising. In this paper, we address the practice of switching languages within an utterance (codeswitching) and, in particular, within advertising slogans, as many ads do when they target ethnic markets. For example, a recent advertisement for *Latina* magazine read: “Looking great doesn't have to cost a fortuna.” In Spanish, the word “fortuna” means “fortune.” In this case, the advertiser appears to believe that the word “fortuna” will be more compelling than “fortune” among a Latino audience.

Our research will examine whether codeswitching in advertising is an effective practice, and what variables may influence its effectiveness. Study 1 investigates the effect of structural (grammatical) constraints on attitude toward codeswitched slogans. Studies 2-5 examine the effect of social factors on attitudes toward codeswitched ad slogans.

As a theoretical base for our studies, we utilize Myers-Scotton's (1993) model of codeswitching. The model hypothesizes that there are structural, or cognitive/grammatical, constraints that dictate when codeswitching can be implemented by the speaker. These constraints constitute a “grammar” of codeswitching which describes the correct and incorrect ways of mixing languages. In addition, the model suggests that there exist socio-psychological variables that influence whether speakers will choose to use codeswitching or not. These variables could include the attitude that speakers have toward a specific language and the use of codeswitching in general.

In study 1, we examined the grammar of codeswitching. That is, we attempted to uncover the effect of syntactic (sentence structure) factors on message evaluations. We developed eight advertising slogans containing either correct or incorrect code switches according to the rules set forth by Myers-Scotton (1993). We also manipulated type of processing during exposure. For that purpose, we had respondents engage in either data-driven or conceptually driven processing (Roediger 1990). We hypothesized that

if they were in the data-driven mode, they would notice the code-switched word and they would be affected by structural constraints. If they were in the conceptually driven mode, they would ignore or not pay attention to the code-switched word and they would not be affected by structural constraints. This type of processing effect should be manifested in more (negative) elaboration on the slogans themselves and a higher likelihood that grammaticality effects would be manifested in the data-driven condition (Chaffin 1997; Elias and Perfetti 1973). The negative elaboration in the data-driven condition should result in worse slogan evaluations in the grammatically incorrect version of the slogans. In the conceptually driven condition we hypothesized that slogan grammaticality would have no effect on slogan evaluations. The findings of our experiment confirmed our expectations, showing that grammaticality of codeswitching only influences slogan evaluations in the data-driven condition. Process and memory measures provided support for the evaluation results.

In studies 2-5, we examined the social factors influencing attitudes toward codeswitched slogans. We manipulated the language that was most salient in the slogans. Minority-to-Majority slogans began in the Minority language (in this case, Spanish) and switched midstream to the Majority language (English). This provided salience to the Majority language, since it contrasted with the language being processed at that particular time. Majority-to-Minority slogans began in the Majority language and switched midstream to the Minority language, providing salience to the Minority language.

Study 2 found that, in codeswitched slogans, the attitudes associated with the salient language influence consumers' attitudes toward the advertised product. When the Majority language was made salient (Minority-to-Majority slogans), the slogans resulted in higher evaluations than when the Minority language was made salient (Majority-to-Minority slogans). We call this the *codeswitching direction effect*. Thought protocols confirm our theorizing that the Majority language is associated with more positive concepts (progress, education, integration,...) than the Minority language, which tends to be associated with marginalization, discrimination, and a feeling of inferiority (also see Koslow et al. 1994).

Study 3 manipulates attitudes toward the majority and minority languages. We find that the codeswitching direction effect is eliminated when bilingual consumers are exposed to materials emphasizing the positive aspects of the Minority language. These results suggest that the codeswitching direction effect is indeed caused by attitudes toward a particular language. Studies 4 and 5 manipulate attitudes toward the practice of codeswitching and attitudes toward a specific codeswitching direction. We find that those factors also moderate the codeswitching direction effect. These results suggest the existence of language schemas—associations that individuals have toward specific languages. These language schemas influence consumers' perception of materials written in different languages.

Our research validates Myers-Scotton's (1993) model in an experimental setting (the original model was derived through observed discourse analysis) and extends it to language comprehension in advertising. Our results represent a step forward in the understanding of language in advertising to bilinguals. In particular, we uncover structural and social constraints in the use of codeswitching in advertising, a practice increasingly used by U.S. advertisers targeting ethnic markets. We also provide some practical guidelines for advertisers considering the use of codeswitched ads.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The Gendered Nature of the Evolving Technoscape: Evaluating Identity, Representation, and Locality

Susan Dobscha, Bentley College

Broadly defined, technology is the “tools, devices or systems designed to help users carry out specific tasks (Koerber 2000).” This definition reflects the historically neutral way in which technology is conceived: as a culturally-void tool used to accomplish otherwise mundane tasks. While technology is often discussed in culturally-neutral terms, recent work in consumer research and other disciplines has begun to place technology squarely within the socially-contested landscapes of gender, race, class, and sexuality. This work has served to create a new definition of technology that emphasizes the continuous and everyday nature of the tool and its reflection of dominant social patterns such as sexism, racism and classism. In addition, if it is believed that technology is “inextricably linked to particular patterns of power and authority” and reflective of the human condition in which it developed and used, then we can assume that the cultural dynamics that shape our interpersonal lives exist in technology-based interactions as well. The utopian notion of a genderless, raceless, and classless world that many believed would emerge from the proliferation of information and communication technologies has not happened and now many researchers are questioning the true nature of this utopian vision.

This session served as an illumination of the core issues surrounding the role of technology in the formation and maintenance of gender. This session built upon a previous special session that introduced the ACR community to the core ideas surrounding the gender/technology intersection. Whereas that session *described* the intersection, this session served to *critique* it. Many within consumer research equate sex and gender and thereby ignore or miss the continuous nature of the gender construct. This session will shed light on the dynamic construct of gender by discussing the fluid nature of gender identities, gender representation in film, and gender locality in public access technology centers.

In the first paper, Zinkhan and Close examined the reshaping of gender identities in cyberspace. Their examination attempted to confront the utopian vision of androgyny in light of the proliferation of technology for use in interpersonal relationship formation and maintenance. While many commentators predicted that gender would be rendered unimportant in the technological landscape, most research has found the opposite to be true. In fact, internet access and usage reflects the exact same gender dynamics that occur in non-technological spaces. Through diaries, long interviews, and observation, the authors shed light on this apparent paradox and provide insight into our current understanding of gender identity.

While the Zinkhan and Close’s paper reflected on the current state of and provided insight into the future of gender identity, Neilson’s paper interpreted the gender representations present in science fiction films. Neilson posited that the gender/technology tension that exists in everyday life is either reflected in or contested in the portrayal of women in sci-fi films. The emergence of the female cyborg in particular demonstrates this tension and was analyzed by the author to provide insights into technology’s role in consumers’ everyday lives.

Finally, Dobscha’s paper served to interpret gender and race relations within a certain locality. While most work on the gender/technology intersection has focused on the way in which gender identity is formed/maintained/supported in cyberspace, Dobscha attempted to understand the role of gender and race in the use of

spaces specifically designed to provide access to the internet. How participation in technology is locally situated in public spaces will provide insights into whether traditional terrains are being maintained or subverted with the introduction of technology as the new social arbiter.

Romance and the Internet: The E-Mergence of E-Dating

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George M. Zinkhan, The University of Georgia

ABSTRACT

Here, we explore the meaning and essence of a relatively new phenomenon—electronic dating (E-Dating). We define key terms (e.g., E-Dating, O-Dating, Netiquette) associated with this emerging aspect of dating. In our exploratory study, we focus on the Internet-based form of E-Dating, by tapping into the experiences of college-aged singles in the U.S. Our methods include a survey, in-depth interviews, and a series of focus group interviews. We assume that through narrative description, human experience can be consciously expressed and explained. We furthermore consider online dating as a kind of social exchange and describe emerging sociocultural, semiotic, and humanistic trends.

INTRODUCTION

“Now fate has met its match” (Yahoo personals, 2003).

Dating is the process of ritualistically courting a partner with a perceived aspect of romantic potential. As such, this set of rituals can be seen as a component of consumer behavior that is currently in a transition stage. In 2001, there were more than 5 million regular users of dating or singles websites (Stone, Rogers, and Platt 2001). Revenue from these dating sites is expected to rise more than 100 percent in the next five years— from US \$313 million (2002) to \$642 million (2007) (Higgins 2003). In 2003, online dating is a \$304 million industry, targeting primarily the younger, presumably single market (Higgins 2003).

There is a dating site for almost every conceivable religion (e.g., catholic singles.com), region (e.g., chicagosingles.com), or cultural background (e.g., globalrishta.com). The most popular online dating services (e.g., match.com, emode.com, kiss.com, matchmaker.com, lavalife.com) draw patrons and curious counterparts from all financial, economic, and social backgrounds. The category leader, match.com, reports 5.7 million hits *per month*, matchmaker.com reports 3.2 million hits per month, and five other sites are in the million-plus range. *Udate Properties* has ten-million individual subscribers (*Newsweek* 2003). Such dating sites provide a virtual opportunity for consumers to interact and, in the process, re-invent dating patterns, rituals, scripts, and motivations.

Two central questions guide the present study. First, “What themes are salient among young (college-aged) daters in the U.S., who use the Internet to initiate and/or facilitate dating relationships? Second, “What concerns and outcomes do daters experience before, during, and after searching, posting, and/or joining an Internet dating/singles site?” In pursuing these questions, we seek:

1. to understand the emergence of Internet dating via informants’ experiences
2. to present qualitative data that illustrate key themes related to Internet dating

Emergence of Netiquette-Based E-Dating

Based on our exploratory interviews and surveys, we synthesize the following definitions:

1. *O-Dater* (Offline)- One who only utilizes traditional, offline means to seek others for possible romance in person.
2. *E-Dater* (Electronic)- One who utilizes an electronic (e.g., the Internet) exchange to seek a dating relationship with another, typically with someone they have not met. This exchange is often one-way. E-Dating includes such activities as subscribing to a site, posting a personal ad or message, replying to messages, and so forth.
3. *E-Dating Success*-A mutual online interaction (exchange), which may occur instantaneously (e.g., ICQ), or be lagged (e.g., an e-mail). Success may precede an offline date, yet an offline date is not always the goal of E-Dating.
4. *Dating Etiquette*-The pre-established, societal and culturally-based set of norms, traditions, and rituals in American O-Dating history. Much dating etiquette is gender-based.
5. *Dating Netiquette*-The emerging set of norms and expectations apparent in E-Dating relationships, generally less stringent/more causal than previous dating etiquette.

American dictionaries term a *date* as “an engagement to go out socially with another person, often out of romantic interest, or “one’s companion on such an outing” (dictionary.com). We believe that there is a need for a separate component to describe non-traditional (e.g., Internet) dating. Thus, our working definition of an E-Date is:

the pre-set time to “meet” in a chatroom or on a dating/singles website to instant message (IM), or the actual online social exchange. The initiation of an E-Date may result via a personal posting, a chat room conversation, an email, some other computer-mediated communication, or even from offline correspondence.

We define E-Dating as:

the process of contact, courtship, and subsequent emotional, psychological, or spiritual bonding/ exchange at any level between persons via a singles, matchmaking, or online dating website/chatroom.

With these key concepts defined, we now explore E-Dating in more depth.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Economic theory can be applied to understand social behavior (e.g., Blau 1964, Gouldner 1960, Ekeh 1974). In marketing, Belk and Coon (1993) studied economic exchanges associated with dating (e.g., gift giving). From this perspective, American dating, mating, and courtship are market exchanges, where daters ritualistically exchange and gifts and spend money as a focal symbolic

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vehicle (Belk and Coon 1991). A social theory of exchange (e.g., Malinowski 1922), however, suggests that such exchanges are associated with prestige—something that is distinct from financial or material exchange. As a caution, viewing dating as an exchange “may threaten to commoditize and destroy the illusions provided by the romantic model of love” (Belk and Coon 1991 p. 521) Nonetheless, we continue in the tradition of social sciences and consider E-Dating as primarily a social exchange.

METHODS

In this exploratory study, we employ multiple methods to explore E-Dating to triangulation in aims of providing corroborating evidence (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Data collection consisted of: a) an exploratory questionnaire, b) preliminary semi-structured, in-depth interviews and c) a series of focus-group interviews.

Questionnaires

To explore the definitions and user perceptions associated with E-Dating, we administered a preliminary questionnaire to all focus group informants, prior to any moderated discussion. The three questions on the questionnaire asked about security, the definition of E-Dating, and e-mail. We also provided a place for informants to write any feelings, elaborations, or comments they prefer not to share with the group as a whole.

In-depth Interviews

A trained and experienced qualitative researcher interviewed three E-Daters in order to get a preliminary feel of the individual perspective of E-Dating. The individual in-depth interviews ranged from approximately 30 to 120 minutes in length. Although the findings of the current study are based on the questionnaires, preliminary depth interviews, and three sessions of focus groups, the researcher has since conducted 27 depth-interviews with E-Daters.

Focus Group Interviews (FGI)

As a primary data source, we formed temporary “small communities” to explore dating perceptions and practices. We chose to concentrate on this method, as focus groups are “less structured and free-flowing” (Zinkmund 1985) and account for the social nature of dating. There were two rounds of group interviewing, with over a year elapsing between the rounds.

FGI Recruitment/Sampling. In Round A, via criterion sampling, we found individuals with E-Dating experience. We recruited singles that have tried (posted to or responded to) E-Dating services, primarily with classified advertisements in a local newspaper. Simultaneously, we drew upon other recruitment sources: a list of study informants on a related topic (chat), and a marketing listserv. Potential informants were sent a screener to ensure their E-Dating experience. We described the study’s general nature, yet not the exact study purpose, to suspend bias. Informants received \$30 for their time and insights.

Round B informants were recruited via a “snowballing” technique, which utilized fliers posted in the downtown area as a starting point. Round B informants were compensated in one of two ways: (1) with extra credit in an undergraduate business course, or (2) community service hours. In this recruitment round monetary incentives were not required to find individuals willing to share their E-Dating experience. Thus, before the second series of research begins, we found more individuals willing to talk about E-Dating experiences.

Data Preparation and Analysis

We compiled responses from the questionnaires from all respondents. We combined these data with field notes and hours of video and audio tapes. In addition, the transcribed preliminary in-depth interviews and researcher notes were incorporated into the database. Researchers extensively watched the videos for body language, reviewed field notes, listened to tapes, and classified questionnaire items. The data analysis procedure was based on immersion into the data, which came from extensive reading/viewing, arranging, coding, and comparing of the data (Creswell 1998). We related and classified the responses according to (1) popular issues, (2) research objectives, (3) source, (4) patterns, and (5) themes.

Open coding lead to axial coding (connecting a category with subcategories). Here, researchers classified the data into categories, according to common words (e.g., confidence) or phrases (e.g., “dating is scary”). We then refined and differentiated the emerging categories. After revisions and re-groupings, subcategories (e.g., time constraints), and their depth and breadth were formed. At this point, we were able to elaborate on how each category and subcategory relates. Finally, we identified the relationships among each code and category. We viewed the data in terms of the research objectives, and rechecked interpretation against the data until we reached saturation.

FINDINGS: EMERGING E-DATING THEMES

Establishing Relationships

In addition to seeking romance, our informants use E-Dating sites and services to establish friendships, or just to find someone to communicate with infrequently. Four informants from group A each used the Internet as a direct tool to establish a new relationship. Informant (A2, M) said he utilized an “online matchmaking service” in an attempt to meet new people—not necessarily romantic, when he first moved to a new city.

Informants likewise spoke of using the sites to find romance. Interestingly, males dominated in sharing personal E-Dating experiences, in almost a brag-like manner. One informant (A3, M) used such a site to seek romance. He “met” a woman in a chat room after seeing a woman on an E-Dating site. This woman lived in Tennessee (although he lives in Georgia). The two had not previously met; however, he made the trip to Tennessee to see her twice.

E-Dating Advances Friendships

Informants noted that the Internet often does keep a pre-established friendly relationship intact via computer-mediated-communication (CMC). CMC contributes towards making a friend into more:

I would say that ICQ’ing during class and emails back and forth are probably as much as what created us going beyond friends, as time we spent together, even though we saw each other every day it was the late night humor emails and ICQs during class...that definitely created the flirtation. (A7, M)

It’s a Small, Small World

Informant (A7, M) met a woman in a dating site. In this site, he came across a woman who intrigued him with common interests, goals, and career aspirations. After initial contact and chatting, he discovered that she was his coworker in a Texas-based satellite office. They then moved their chatting sessions from the dating site to their company’s Intranet. Their online encounters lead to a three-week romantic involvement. The informant, from the Atlanta

office, told of his “business trips”, which he took three weeks in a row. Such “E-affairs” may be especially of interest to managers who supervise “business related travel”, as employees often use the Internet (or Intranet) for more than job-related tasks. We see that such work-based Internet tasks range from “paying an occasional cable bill”, to facilitating/carrying out a romantic relationship. In the instance of (A7, M), he used his company Intranet to accomplish personal goals. We see that E-Dating is a tool, even on a regulated network (e.g., a company’s Intranet), to seek an offline romance. As we reveal below, this tool often: a) facilitates offline encounters, and/or b) creates online relationships.

Facilitating Offline Encounters. In both E-Dates and O-Dates, informants seek pleasure and affirmation. The way in which they find and merit these goals is different offline than offline. In the exploratory group, six informants said they used the Internet to facilitate off-line relationships (A-2M, 3M, 6F, 7M, 9F, and 11F). These informants each used a dating site to maintain ties with people whom they had *first* met in real life. These instances consisted of romantic, platonic, and family relationships. For instance, informant (A9, F) met a man she developed romantic feelings for while studying abroad in Israel. Upon returning to the US, the international couple kept in touch through online means. CMC was the choice of keeping in touch, as international calls are “too expensive” and “the time zone differences became an issue”. However, many Internet users who reportedly maintain relationships on dating sites have found methods of supplementing their contact through phone calls or meetings in person.

Creating Online Relationships. The second round of informants expressed a new theme. The finding here is that they are *creating* meaningful personal relationships online (chat rooms, email) in addition to just utilizing the Internet to maintain existing relationships. The dating sites serve more so to introduce than to rekindle prior relationships. Relationships that have been created online are often due to common personal characteristics such as shyness or interest in common sites. Such relationships blossom on the E-Dating sites and chat rooms.

The Electronic Edge

Informants say the Internet provides an extra edge, by serving as a confidence-builder for creating romantic relationships. That is, E-Dating sites may give some individuals the confidence to pursue a date. More aggressively, one woman met a man online from halfway across the country. Two months later, they moved in together. “I was scared out of my mind...but I was enough of a hopeless romantic to do it” (A6, F). She felt the Internet aided her decision to “go for it”.

E-Dating Geographical Barrier

E-Dating is best for finding singles living in or near the same city. That is, the Internet brings new daters together from local communities much more frequently than any other search option. Informants frequently claim a key attribute of the Internet is that it “reduces geographic boundaries in both relationship formation and maintenance” (A9, F), but they do not report this in their actions. While it is possible to meet others from distant geographic boundaries via E-Dating, informants rarely spoke of such experiences in a positive note.

Resulting from solely online encounters, (A6, F) moved from North Carolina across the country (to South Dakota) for an attempted romantic relationship. This move came after two months of online contact. Not only did she go for a weekend, as the previous informant, yet she went with her belongings and intentions of permanently moving in. She did just that. Note here, e-interactions were the sole motivation for her move, as there were no additional career or familial persuasions. The informant did not consider this

move to be risky. When probed concerning the risk of such a drastic move, she replied, “I’ve been talking to him online—he is not a complete stranger” (A6, F). She was back in North Carolina after just five weeks of living with this “non-stranger”. Most other informants expressed some sense of the risks associated with making the transition from E-Dating to O-Dating.

Sacred Place. Whichever area of the country (or world) an E-Dater resides, the sacredness of the home remains. The home is a sacred place, and there are sacred relationships created in the home. (E-Dating) “is good for nights you don’t want to go out, but want some sort of social interaction” (B5, F). Most E-Daters enjoy the presence of their own home—complete with material and familiar comforts, as they E-Date. However, the Internet is a medium that can cross time barriers and space boundaries. Wireless capabilities reduce space limitations, and make E-Dating available almost anywhere (e.g., via wireless communication).

Time Wasted, Time Saved

Although technology is lessening physical space limitations, individuals’ time remains a constraint in dating. All of the focus-group informants in Round A mentioned severe time constraints in their lives, stemming from both school and other extra-curricular activities. Informants A-2M, 7M and 10F provided the best examples of how the Internet has saved them time in respect to their off-line relationships. Informant (A2, M) used an Internet dating service to meet people when he first came to Athens. He claims that the Internet is a mainstay of his current relationship, since both he and his girlfriend are “graduate students and consequently have little time.” Similarly, one informant primarily uses the Internet to maintain relationships, due to her “time constraints in life” (A10, F). We see that technology makes E-Dating appear as a time-efficient activity. Two attractive features are: a) matching services, and b) the E-Dating screener.

Matching Services. Along with real-time analysis of potential E-Dates, high-speed connections provide “sophisticated and speedy matching services”. Because of the fast-paced American lifestyle and the emphasis on career establishment, the Internet is progressively being utilized as a dating tool. As one informant shares, “there is little time available after work. I don’t want to go out to meet people; I interact with people all day. I don’t have time to do both” (B6, M). Without time to go to social events, gatherings, and the traditional places to meet dates, informants report to be “strapped for time to meet someone.” A collaborative virtual environment saves time for all parties involved. For instance, while chatting on an E-Dating site, there is no need to wait on technology, as messages are generally quickly (if not instantaneously) sent and replied to.

E-Dating Screener. The robust scalability and data archiving of personal pages allows a more time-efficient E-Dating experience. Even to one who does not “take the time” to join a specified E-Dating site (e.g., match.com), common ISPs (e.g., CompuServe, Mindspring, AOL, MSN) provide personals for the busy individual. Personals allow one “to screen” thousands in the time it would take to interact with a mere few...if any...at a social gathering or event” (B4, M). Such pages or specific personal ads can even be saved for future reference.

Recurring E-Dating Patterns

E-Dating does not necessarily follow the pre-existing courtship principles or dating patterns of earlier eras. That is, a new form of etiquette faces the generation of E-Daters with: a) less intimacy, b) community based self-disclosure, c) looks that may deceive, and d) lies.

Less Intimacy. Where traditional, offline relationships assume some physical proximity, relationships formed online are often entered into with the understanding of the limited potential for

physical contact. This limited or lack of proximity is repeatedly associated with E-Dating. Consumers are more likely to seek gratification from face-to-face communication than from the Internet (Flaherty et al. 1998). Much gratification in relationships comes from intimacy. Our informants agree: "I like the intimacy of the whole person, not a cold screen" (B7, M).

Community Based Self-Disclosure. Although E-Dating lacks intimacy, our informants do tend to be more candid more rapidly with those they have just met on E-Dating sites, as compared with people they have just met in person. However, such candid disclosure seems to occur most with E-Dating in one's community (e.g., geographical, interest-based, racial, religious). Likewise, the amount of time spent building a sense of trust with co-members of one's community, is shorter than the time taken to formulate trust with an E-Dater *outside* of one's community. This expedited sense of trust seems especially true if the chance of having the two communities cross is slim or if multiple communities are shared (e.g., finding another German Harley-Davidson member online). "We had a lot in common, so I didn't waste time explaining about my background; I could quickly tell he understood" (B8, F). Similarly, anonymity creates an opportunity for self-revelation that may not be present in the context of the traditional O-Date.

Looks May Be Deceiving. Without a photo, the aspect of attractiveness is "out of the picture", and attention focuses on written material. Hence, an E-Dater's personality may show through, without becoming overpowered by looks. The cues used in life (e.g., body language, dress, personal hygiene, tone of voice) are not available online. In addition, many deceptions occur online (e.g., via photos). A submitted photo may be outdated, doctored up, or actually represent someone else all together. Most commonly, the photo posted is from a distant perspective or just a "very good picture". "I didn't recognize her from the photo she sent me. When I met her, she had really bad skin" (B3, M).

Lies, Lies, Lies. While not always harmful or ill-intended, lies are a problem associated with E-Dating. Female informants reluctantly shared that they have lied about their weight and their age. One 20 year-old informant (B1, F) told a man she met on kiss.com that she was 21. Her rationale was to be "included in the drinking scene" on potential future O-Dates. Men reported lying about their athletic condition, income, and relationship status. Some male informants (e.g., B6, M) claimed to lie for the "entertainment value of it". One informant described how he occasionally gets together with friends and they go online (to E-Dating sites) to pretend they are interested in "ugly chicks." They pursue this prank with flattering e-mails to the girls, with no intentions of sincere communication.

E-Dating's Dark Side

Many informants reported positive experiences, yet some informants also expressed negative opinions and outcomes concerning their E-Dating experiences. Overall, negative perceptions did not outweigh the potential benefits of E-Dating, as none of the participants spoke of a negative experience that has prevented continuation of E-Dating.

Potential Danger in E-Dating. E-Dating can be dangerous, in a different manner than traditional dating. When and if one first meets an E-Date offline, it is common to feel as if the other is not a true stranger. "I felt as if I had known him for years, just after a few chat sessions" (A6, F). By chatting, information on favorite sports teams, authors and foods may have been shared with another E-Dater. Individuals seem to know many personal facts; however these "facts" are often misrepresentations. It is difficult to treat this person as a stranger, yet it is important to exercise normal precautions.

E-Daters may have a tendency to set aside precautions associated with blind dates. For example, one informant assumed that the men she met on dating sites were sincere, stable, and single. Yet, she stated that several people she had dated online were either abusive or in committed relationships. Interestingly, her offline dates did not cease after one bad experience—even with physical abuse.

He promised me everything. At first I found it hard to believe, here was someone who I would move to the other end of the country to be with. Well maybe I shouldn't have had so much faith in him. It hurts now, but I am glad for every second he gave me and for every moment I was in his arms. I know I have the capacity within to love... and one day I will love again. Only this time I will get it right! (A6, F)

Without spite, she characterizes her past negative dating experiences as "very fruitful and positive learning experiences."

Risky Business

There are always risks in dating, especially in the care of blind dates, first dates or E-Dates. The risks associated with twenty-first century dating "far exceed the risks in recent history" (B1, F). Much of the risk in E-Dating stems from: a) the unknown audience, and b) security risk.

Unknown Audience. There are social risks associated with E-Dating. For instance, while some CMC has a known audience (e.g., e-mail), E-Dating site subscriptions involve posting information or graphics to an unknown audience (e.g., personal advertisements). While E-Dating may allow one to interact with many individuals or pursue O-Dates in a "socially ascending" manner, E-Dating may tarnish one's reputation. One informant described how E-Dating is socially risky: "Anytime I type personal information, there is no telling where it may end up. My picture as well, may end up on someone's desktop or even printed and framed on their bedside table" (B11, F). This thought is disturbing to her, and is risky according to other informants—as providing personal information and photographs on a personal advertisement is, in essence, giving this information to strangers.

Security Risk. Security is an issue in online relationships: "I'm very much aware of the temptation many have to use their networking skills to look at online transactions and information that they are not privy to" (B4, M). Another informant echoes this sentiment, "I absolutely am concerned about security. I am a computer tech and know all holes in systems. I only conduct transactions with 128 bit-encryption and NEVER with my social security number" (B3, M). Most respondents are hesitant to give out their general e-mail address and instead use the address provided by the E-Dating service. One informant noted that he has two real e-mail addresses and one fake "spam account." Identity stealing is also a concern to informants (B4, M; B11, F; B3, M).

DISCUSSION

Here, we present a "snapshot" of perceptions related to E-Dating, as experienced by single, college-aged Americans. The Internet has been around for over thirty years, but it took the invention of the web browser to make it available to a wide audience. It is approximately in the last five years that E-Dating has become popular with a large segment of the population. In 2002, the market for paid Web content jumped 105% overall. Yet, the personals/E-Dating industry witnessed even higher growth. In the third quarter of 2002, the personals realm saw a 387% gain, earning higher revenues than any other segment of online paid content—even more than the business/investment and entertainment/lifestyle segments (Elkin 2002).

It has been argued that the Internet may cause every power relationship on the planet to be renegotiated. It also appears that the Internet will be both a revolutionary and evolutionary force in a variety of human endeavors. For instance, the Internet has revolutionized business practices, especially in the area of B2B marketing (Zinkhan 2002). At present, it appears that the Internet may have even more profound consequences for human dating rituals. In one sense, these rituals may be traced to the distant past, as some human courtship rituals seem to have interesting counterparts in the animal kingdom (e.g., courtship patterns among great apes, birds, or higher mammals). Nonetheless, consider the profound impact of the automobile on human courtship. The impact of E-Dating may be just as strong and far reaching as the impact of the automobile. From a postmodern perspective, the Internet will have a strong influence on human consciousness and relationships (Watson et al. 2000). E-Dating may prove to be just one example of how the Internet transforms human behavior in the immediate future.

Implications for Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory assumes individuals, in this case, E-Daters, may accurately anticipate the payoffs of different decisions (Thibaut and Kelley 1959). However, daters often do not know precisely what they are looking for in a dating partner. Sometimes, they are not looking for a commitment (e.g., just to chat). Other times, interactions may cause “instant attraction.” E-Daters make impulsive choices (e.g., no children, only blondes, medium build). An E-Dater may express a desire to avoid a date with someone with pale skin, under 5’7”, or with red hair. However, these “rules” may be disregarded for a variety of reasons.

Limitations

In our study, there is not much age or gender diversity. There may be important differences in E-Dating perceptions depending on age, gender, occupation, motivations, interests, and geography. International comparisons, as well as cross-national differences may present further insight, especially in terms of consumer confidence (Zinkhan and Balzas 1998).

Future Research

In-depth interviews, case studies, and surveys remain promising methods for conducting research on the topic of E-Dating. Our working definitions (e.g., E-Date, netiquette) may aid in understanding this new phenomenon. Future researchers may wish to validate or amend these definitions. In addition, they may seek to discover the degree of intimacy E-Daters allow online, and how online relationships progress to off-line relationships. Our study is a pilot designed to stimulate such future inquiries.

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Female Cyborgs in Film: Heeding the Siren's Call

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper adopts a visual consumption approach to consumer research, by analysing the role of cyborgs, especially female cyborgs, in film in order to interpret the ways in which these representations both mirror/reflect and shape possibilities at the gender/technology intersection. The analysis is structured around two guiding frameworks, the first a typology of fear of technology, and the second, the notion of a 'cyborg continuum.' Borrowing from Leiss, a typology of (western) society's fear of technology is developed that involves three inter-linked forms: 1) inversion of the machine/master relationship; 2) prosthetic fear/fear of death, and; 3) challenge to the social order. This is juxtaposed with the idea of a cyborg continuum, stretching from 'pure' machine to 'pure' human and composed of intermediate stages that represent varying forms of human-machine fusion and accord with the notion/metaphor of the cybernetic organism, or cyborg.

The female cyborg presents a threat to hegemonic beliefs about the condition of women: "In our culture, to be in command of the very latest technology signifies being involved in directing the future and so it is a highly valued and mythologized activity" (Wacjman, 1991, p. 144). Female cyborgs, who are 'in command' of, or embody, the latest technology act as metaphors for 'what cannot be spoken' and pose a threat to the social order.

The body of the paper consists of a discursive analysis of how both male and female cyborg characters in science fiction films, themselves occupying various positions along the cyborg continuum, serve as visual representations of the three levels of fear of technology. Film images are seen as not only reflecting the society within which they were produced, but also shaping conceptions of possible gender/technology roles. Johnston has suggested it is not enough to say that film acts as a mirror, or as the propaganda arm of hegemonic ideologies. Such an approach does not explain how ideology is inscribed in the process of filmmaking. Instead, we must pair a "knowledge of the way a film text functions... [with] an analysis of [the] ... ideological, political, economic and ... social relations which determine the text at the time of its production" (Johnston 1975, p. 124). Similarly, we can theorize about the effects that consumption of these visual images would have on consumers.

It is as a challenge to the social order that female cyborgs present the greatest threat to patriarchy and it is through an examination of female cyborgs in particular that we can begin to get at the constraints and opportunities that these images offer to consumers. Four films will be examined as 'case studies' of the portrayal of female cyborgs in film: *Metropolis*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Star Trek: First Contact* and *Eve of Destruction*.

The role of the Borg Queen, from the film *Star Trek: First Contact*, is specifically examined in this context. The extremely gendered nature of the Borg Queen, in particular, defeats Haraway's (1985) suggestion of the cyborg as a 'potent fusion', useful for illustrating the possibility of egalitarian social arrangements in a post-gender world. However, the paper argues that the film does 'call to' a certain portion of the audience and that the female cyborg can offer the potential for liberation from patriarchal philosophical paradigms as well as from oppression experienced in everyday life.

The Gendering of Public Technology Spaces: A Feminist Analysis of a Public Internet Center

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“the politics of becoming virtual are not simply related to the subjective possibilities and constraints of cyberspaces. Rather, the politics of ‘becoming virtual’ are also caught up with how gendered virtual bodies and identities are inscribed and elaborated through the social locations in which virtual reality technologies are used/consumed.”

Green, 2001

The above quote serves to anchor the central ideas of this paper. Technology as it has manifested in the internet experience has emerged as a major arbiter of social relations. In its current form, cyberspace has allowed consumers to shift their embedded identities, play with otherwise immutable social markers (such as sex, race, and sexual orientation), and challenge traditional notions of time and space. Yet, as has been documented in recent years, cyberspace has not in fact created a ‘genderless’ or ‘raceless’ world; in fact, gender and race warfare online are more the norm. Stalking and hate speech occupy more bandwidth than gender- or race-tolerant zones of communication. One study found that 90% of the chatting in women-only chat rooms was submitted by men, thus, leaving feminist and other scholars to wonder if the utopian vision of a de-gendered web world was naïve upon application.

Why was a genderless world such a seductive idea? What does the pursuit of transcendence through technology really say about those groups subverted by the dominant culture? This transcendence into a genderless society reflected the relations in which dominant social relations were still embedded. The absence of body and subsequently the inability to reflect visually on sex or race, instead of leveling an unlevel playing field of communications, work relations, political power, and religious doctrine, instead actually created more polarized discourses between sexes and among races. Instead of gender fluidity we found gender warfare, where those cybercitizens who chose to gender swap (and this most often takes the shape of a man pretending to be a woman) instead chose to become angry, vengeful, and violent. Therefore, instead of a newer, better, genderless cyberworld, a world emerged that was in fact more overtly masculine and patriarchal in its communication styles and social relations. When gender dynamics were removed, a predominantly masculine space filled the void.

FEMINIST REVISIONING OF TECHNOLOGY

In light of the failure of the internet to create and maintain a space where women and other subjugated groups could communicate, organize, and mobilize, feminist scholars have gone back to the drawing board to determine how the current partial and eventual cohesive cultural embeddedness of technology will affect those groups which access and mastery of technology often miss. The last twenty years of feminist analysis of technology is grim; more boys use computers and attend computer camps, more computer games are aimed at boys (thus allowing them to master computer commands and other functions), men outnumber women in technology majors in college and technology jobs in corporations, and girls are more likely to be bullied away from public technology spaces (such as classroom terminals and shared home computers).

Even in light of these inequalities, women have still flocked to the internet in increasing numbers. While the computer game industry still ignores girls as a target market, it appears they pay attention once the girl attains a higher level of consumption status. While men predominately still view the computer as a tool to master

and assist with improving efficiency, women are more likely to use it to promote kinship work, a highly gendered activity whereby family and friend social networks are maintained through regular on- and offline communication. Email, instant messaging, and personal webpages are all means by which women are maintaining their social networks.

Even with these increasing numbers, a new illiteracy has emerged. Women and minorities are slow to enter into the more complex applications associated with the internet, such as starting a web-based business, buying and selling items on consumer-to-consumer sites, and job board searching. As public libraries emerged in the past to combat the then growing problem of traditional reading illiteracy, today, a new public space has emerged to attempt to overcome this growing information chasm that is currently in place with regard to technology access. Public internet centers are a recent phenomenon in the United States, and have risen to combat the growing public concern over uneven access to technology. This concern had a significant financial boost from Bill Gates, who recently donated \$20 million to the Boys and Girls Club of America in order to build and maintain computers in the local clubs nationwide. It is important to note that these clubs are located in predominantly poor and heavily minority neighborhoods thus leading us to believe that this issue over unequal access was at least in part the motivation for Gates’ sizable donation. Yet, it is believed that money and updated facilities will not be enough to fix this systemic problem. For it is not merely access that will solve this problem; it is also take a closer look at these public spaces to determine if in fact other factors related to the construction of physical spaces are serving to inhibit or restrict this new literacy initiative.

While many have promoted access as the panacea to all problems related to technology inequalities, few have discussed the physical spaces that this access is embedded in. People must still interact with computers in a very physical way and in the case of service organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs or public internet access centers such as the one observed for this paper, access is mediated by many other factors. Factors such as layout, rules for usage, presence of a tutor or helper, and age, race, and sex of the users will all serve to shape the landscape of interaction within these public technology forms. The power of these confounding variables cannot be understated, yet, may have been previously ignored or discounted by scholars in the area of technology access because of inherent biases in the view of how people interact with technology. Many of us sit in front of our computers alone or in very private settings such as offices or perhaps within a public setting such as a coffee shop but often without any friends or family nearby, thus making the interaction still take on the feeling of privacy. Yet this isolation is not universal. There are many public videogame playing spaces, public internet centers, community centers, public libraries, computer labs, and internet cafes providing access to the internet and computers.

Therefore, this research attempts to provide insight into Green’s thesis that existing in and claiming power in the world of technology is not just about entering into the subjective space of cyberspace but is also, perhaps more importantly, about understanding and critiquing those social locations where technology is both produced and consumed. My observations of a public internet center in a working class and ethnically diverse suburb of Boston, MA attempt to answer the following questions:

- How does gender affect the negotiation of public space when technology is the primary arbiter of that space?
- Do the locales in which the technology are embedded reflect the social conditions of the community or culture at large?
- Will consumers' interactions with technology and each other in these spaces still follow prescribed gender roles?
- How does the physical configuration of the space serve to strengthen or diminish hegemony?

It is my contention that, like so many other public spaces, technology spaces will occupy their secure place within the realm of the masculine.

METHODOLOGY, LOCATION, AND SETTING

The data collection for this paper consisted of a series of covert observational sessions where I entered the center without letting the patrons know that I was observing them. Upon entering the facility, I would sign in as if I were another patron in order to "blend in." Also, while I possess a laptop that would have served my purpose of taking fieldnotes, I instead opted to use the computers that were available in the center, with the understanding that I would relinquish my seat should the center become full.

While overt observational tactics seem to be more the norm in feminist methodology (see Reinharz (1992) for a discussion of feminist observation research), I concluded that to remain covert would enable me to witness patrons' interactions with the computers, each other, and the space itself in a completely unguarded way. In addition, I was interested in how patrons' interacted with the physical space, not just the computers themselves, therefore, not alerting them to my presence allowed for an uninterrupted observational session. These sessions lasted about three hours and were conducted over a two month period. I was given permission by the center's marketing director to observe the patrons in exchange for my volunteering my time as a tutor.

The center is housed within an old warehouse in a large city outside Boston. This suburb houses mostly working class Americans with several distinct ethnic enclaves interspersed throughout. The center's configuration resembles a typical computer lab setup with computers facing the wall parallel to each other. These computers rim the edge of the room. Everyone who is working on a computer is facing a wall. The welcome desk is the first artifact of the center that patrons see as they walk in. It includes a sign up sheet, general information pamphlets, and a volunteer who acts as a receptionist and a technical support person. There are other spaces within the center but they are primarily used for workshops and off-site meetings and are thus kept separate from the primary public access space.

From observations within the center and from interviews conducted with staff members, it was determined that patrons primarily use the center for checking email, conducting job searches, playing games, and reading news websites (field notes). Average time spent in the center varies based on time of day: a working crowd inhabits the space on the lunch hour for short periods of time while a different crowd, comprised of various demographic groups, use the facilities in the late afternoon (interview with staff). It is important to point out that this center sits directly behind an elderly live-in facility and that many of those residents use this center quite frequently. Every time I observed the center, there was at least one senior citizen there using one of the computers.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE USE OF A PUBLIC INTERNET CENTER

My work on technology in public spaces is informed by the extensive work in feminist theory in the construction and mainte-

nance of public spaces and how public spaces reflect the dominant masculine ideology in which they are constructed. My initial interest in public technology spaces rested in the idea that since technology is a new social mediator that has on the outside created speculation about the ability of cyberspace to create new genderless spaces where men and women could co-exist without the familiar hegemony that exists in other collective spaces, such as homes and workplaces, that these public spaces would reflect substantial movement away from the traditional constructions of space toward a new world order of space. My observations quickly affirmed what others theorized: that in fact these spaces were not genderless, were not more suitable for marginalized groups, and were not the places where the information illiteracy problem would be solved.

In fact, it is my observation from my work at this center that configuration of the space in and of itself serves to maintain the traditions of the patriarchy. While feminine tradition supports communication and community building, the masculine model favors silence and individualism. The way in which this center is physically configured as well as the rules for use serves as a (perhaps unintended) means of silencing its patrons and deterring them from building relations among other patrons.

I would like to first focus on the configuration of space and discuss how the physical setup of the center creates a masculine communication environment. The space configuration reflects Tannen's conclusions about the relationship between communication and the configuration of the space in which the communication is happening. Her research found that men were more comfortable in communication formats where they were facing forward (such as in a car), while women preferred to communicate face to face. Therefore, while men would prefer the face-the-wall setup in this room, women would find it alienating. The setup would not foster a comfortable interaction with other patrons. Therefore, the space is designed to deter communication. This is in fact mandated by the center's rules, which are posted throughout the center.

This rule is reflected in the center's adherence to the "library model" of space construction, where talking between patrons is frowned upon and is only done in hushed tones, and where interaction between patron and volunteer is also done in quiet tones and for very short periods of time. This "library model" was first outlined to me by the center's marketing director. This term struck me initially because it meant that I would not have an opportunity to observe patrons interacting with each other, which was one of the central themes I was interested in studying. Yet, when I began my observations of the center I began to notice that the library model was in full effect; patrons spoke to each other and the volunteers in hushed tones, there was no music playing, and no noise of any kind was evident. There were reading materials laid out on shelves and tables for patrons to peruse and software packages were available to be checked out for use.

Where this "library model" idea led me was to evaluate the cultural underpinnings of such a model and comment on the assumptions underlying it. The library model as such is based on the assumption that learning, reading, and studying are to be done in a quiet and individuated atmosphere. This is much like the predominant movie theater model which also expects patrons to sit quietly and only interact with or about the movie after the credits begin to roll. However, what this model ignores is the nature of being "public." What does it mean to inhabit a public space? While the aforementioned public spaces do require the omission of communication, most public spaces are designed expressly for the sole purpose of open, dyadic communication. Coffee shops, community centers, shopping malls, theme parks, and other spaces often catering to groups allow patrons to communicate openly and casually. Why then would an internet access center choose to align

with the quietness of a library versus the social interaction of a community center? Both the community and internet access center are in the business of providing a public service to the community at large. Both are non-profits that attempt to serve their particular constituencies with related activities, workshops, training sessions, and organizing space. Yet while the community center provides an open, often messy physical space in which patrons can *interact*, the internet access center provides a closed, often sterile environment which patrons can *access*.

The desire to maintain this sterility is reinforced by the volunteers and full-time staff. When asked technical questions, the staff respond to patrons in quiet tones and provide short answers. During one observational period, an elderly woman was using an email program and making very visible sounds of frustration. She finally went to the front desk to try to get an answer to her problem and the volunteer came over to her computer to try to assist her. This happened three times when finally the volunteer told the elderly woman that she had other work to do and could no longer help her. This same response to other clients with extensive needs was reflected in the director's comments about the center's "usual suspects." This referred to clients who used the center but needed extensive hand holding when interacting with the computers. These particular patrons were typically from the elderly live-in facility. These elderly patrons comprise a large portion of the center's total population, however, their needs are not being fully met because of the effects of the center subscribing to the "library model." It is widely known that many elderly feel isolated and out of touch due to their living situations and the absence of extended family. In fact, many of the elderly patrons of the center are using the computers to stay in touch with family. Therefore, it is particularly ironic that they must conform to this model of silence and isolation when it is precisely that feeling of isolation that they are attempting to escape by entering the center, learning the new technology and using it to communicate with others.

The primary question that remains from this brief analysis of this particular space is: does the library model fit the needs of patrons of computer technology in public spaces? Does deterring communication in a group setting such as this enhance or restrict the experience of the center's patrons? Why has computer interaction been equated to book reading, a time for solitary reflection? And has the assumption that this is the appropriate model deterred others who are not comfortable with this type of layout from using these centers? The key conclusion from this study is that this center serves the same people which personal computer technology serves, while alienating those people supposedly targeted by public internet sites: those who otherwise would not have access to this new form of literacy, thus furthering the chasm of techno-illiteracy.

CONCLUSIONS

Public internet spaces such as the center described above do not seem to be serving the needs of those they were initially supposed to be serving. Providing access to groups of citizens who would not normally have access (such as the poor, elderly, undereducated, etc.) is a worthy goal in this new economy of information. Instead, this center reflects the overall culture of the internet at large. While the numbers are steadily changing, the predominant demographics of cyberspace are still intact.

This paper illuminates how two facets of an internet center, the physical layout and space configuration and the rules imposed by the adherence to a library model, served to reinforce gender hegemony that also dominates the virtual space constructed by computer technology. The configuration of the space reflected masculine norms and the library model created rules that reinforced these

norms. Reconfiguring the space to reflect feminine and multicultural norms in communication may be a way to increase usage among the aforementioned under-represented groups. As mentioned earlier, the elderly are a heavy usage group in this center but their constant questions are viewed as a burden on the staff. In addition, they are discouraged from interacting with each other even if it is related to computer support. This particular group feels isolated within their living quarters, escapes to a public space to communicate via email (instant messenger is not allowed) to their loved ones in order to feel more connected and less isolated, and then are discouraged from talking to one another and the volunteers because of this strict adherence to the center's rules of conduct.

While other public spaces that once demanded quiet, such as movie theaters, have responded to changing consumer needs (such as providing a matinee where mothers are "allowed" to bring babies and kids who may make noise or cry), other public spaces have been reluctant to make similar changes. It is my suggestion to management of this center that they abandon the library model in favor of a "community center" model, briefly described above. The community center model would provide a very different service to the center's relevant publics than their current model. The center would create a more communal, affiliatory, and inclusive space by changing both the norms of the center and its physical layout as well. Just because people are working on computers doesn't mean that they want to be cut off from what could quite literally be their neighbor. Previous studies on household technology have shown that while some family members may want privacy when they engage in computer communication, others choose to interact with it in a public space in the house, notably the kitchen or family room. As Sherry notes, "world making and local place making are inextricably intertwined (2000, p. 274)." Thus the place of public internet access must reflect the world it is helping to create. This is a world where everyone has equal access to and literacy in computer technology, as well as the local place it is shaping in order to achieve its goals.

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The Co-Creation of Meaning Between Marketers and Consumers; Step 1: How Marketing Creatives Interpret Consumer Motivations

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BACKGROUND

The goal of this research is to improve our understanding of the “Cultural Meaning” production system as suggested by McCracken (1986). In this system, consumption meanings are co-created by consumers and marketers through a give and take of meanings regarding advertising, product design, and names. The purpose of the present paper is to learn more about the initial phase in this process: the absorption and interpretation of consumer learning on the part of marketing creatives. While marketers today draw on their “inner voices” to come up with creative ideas for new packages, names and ad campaigns, they are also very sensitive to signals and sentiments from their targets. How do they balance their own needs to be independent and creative with needs to be sensitive to their markets? Of all the market information they receive, which helps them the most?

Kover (1995) wrote an important article in which he explored how copywriters sense and understand audience motives, and how they use this understanding to write copy. His research suggests that copywriters empathize with their audiences insofar as they carry on imaginary conversations in which they alternately become audience members, then themselves, and then audience members. Borrowing terminology from symbolic interactionism, they negotiate meaning internally, alternately taking on the roles of what Mead (1934) would call the Self (themselves as acting communicators) and the Significant Other or what Kover calls a prototypic “ideal viewer.” Gobe (2001) touches on this where he talks of the ongoing dialogue between the brand and the user.

Others who have written about meaning formation as a result of one-on-one dialogues include Pierce (1977) and Colapietro (1989). Kover goes on to wonder whether the implicit theories about consumers he found among copywriters were also true of creative workers in other fields such as novelists and product designers. In short, how do creative workers in other fields than copywriting use empathy and market understanding to come up with creative content?

The purpose of this paper is to explore implicit—and explicit—theories of consumer motivations among workers in five creative fields: interior decoration, architecture, fashion consulting, stand-up comedy and automobile design. Marketers are told to be empathic (Leonard and Rayport 1997, Hill and Rivkin 1999), but how empathic are they? Empathy might help copywriters, but does it help car designers? If they are empathic, how are they empathic? Based on this empathic understanding, what are car designers’ theories about how to make emotional connections with their buyers?

Specifically, the questions driving this research include the following:

1. How are marketing empathy and marketing creativity interrelated? How does one area inform the other?
2. Do workers in creative marketing fields use empathy to sense how to engage their audiences and make the emotional connection between audience members and their offerings?
3. What are creative workers’ implicit theories about motivational and behavioral stages buyers go through including

initial awareness of the offering and subsequent emotional connection and purchase?

This research represents the first leg of a research project interrelating artistic creativity and marketing creativity. To paraphrase Brown and Patterson (2000), my goal is less to understand what marketing can do for art—and more to understand what art can do for marketing. There is an increasing demand for creativity across all areas of business (see Florida 2002), and an important starting point to help marketers become more creative is to focus on the work of workers in marketing who rely heavily on their creativity, workers, that is, who constantly have to come up with fresh offerings. How do they do it? How do they sense and incorporate audience sensitivities?

INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN EMPATHY AND CREATIVITY

Finding intersections between empathy and creativity is not easy.

First, these subjects represent two separate research streams. The empathy literature is grounded in psychotherapy (e.g., Rogers 1957) and deals little with innovation and creativity. Kohut (1977) defined empathy simply as “vicarious introspection.” As Pluth (2002) writes, “empathy involves imaginatively and entirely entering another’s point of view in order to illuminate behavioral motivation, participating in another’s conscious existence, ‘becoming’ another’s actual subjectivity and experiencing reality, both affective and cognitive from that perspective” (p. 2). All of these relate to the need for therapists to have a deeper understanding of client psychological problems. The concept “Einfühlung” or German for “in-feeling” is used in connection with works of art but only in terms of empathic involvement with the work of art, or merging with art objects we experience aesthetically (Katz, 1963).

In contrast, creativity is defined as “the imaginatively gifted recombination of known elements into something new” (Ciardi quote in Cougar 1994, p. 14). Csikszentmihalyi says that “creativity results from the interaction of a system composed of three elements: a culture that contains symbolic rules, a person who brings novelty into the symbolic domain, and a field of experts who recognize and validate the innovation” (1996, p. 6).

The latter definition, reflected in other work by Csikszentmihalyi (1999) stresses his interest in the system-like character of creativity inasmuch as an audience is involved in appreciating the creative product. For Csikszentmihalyi, however, the audience is relatively small and consists of peers or fellow experts along with the creator.

For our purposes, a better definition might be to consider one by Arons and Richard: “Creativity involves both originality and meaningfulness. In the simplest terms, a creative project is original, that is, it is new or departs from the conventional in some major aspect. Furthermore, it also communicates; it is meaningful to others” (quote in Schneider, Bugental, and Pierson, 2001 p. 128). This definition is more interesting as it suggests a broader audience with which the creator is communicating or carrying on a dialogue. In other words, to the extent that the definition includes communication, it includes a sense of the “Other” or the possibility of an empathic relationship.

Second, the separation between the two fields—marketing research (or empathy)—and marketing action (creating new products, pricing strategies, package designs, etc.) is wide and long-standing. People in these two fields have different orientations and different world views. Researchers are focused on consumer understanding, while marketers succeed based on actions (new products, ads, price plans). In fact, balancing the needs to be empathic versus creative can be difficult. Based on many conversations I have had with marketers, if one viewpoint dominates the other, there is usually trouble. An excessive focus on satisfying stated buyer needs (usually, with the familiar and comfortable) leads to monotonous, me-too product designs and advertising. While there is not much of a concern that researchers, like Foreign Service personnel who spend excessively long periods in close quarters with foreign populations will “go native” and lose their objectivity, excessive identification with a target population can be troublesome. Qualitative market researchers know, for example, that for many product categories, a little naivete is often helpful. That way, respondents are not surprised by questions that to them are patently obvious (Langer 2002). Conversely, an excessive focus on creativity can produce interesting new products as well as advertising contest winners (see Clio awards in Ogilvy 1985)—but it can also produce notable market failures. Creativity for the sake of creativity or pure self-expression is fine in certain art circles where profits are not the issue (see “Mavericks” in Becker 1982), but can be very detrimental in a business context.

Note, however, that a number of approaches have been suggested in order to heighten marketers’ empathy with target buyers. The most obvious is to hire designers who match the target in terms of as many dimensions as possible: age, sex, education, and particularly, familiarity level with the product or item in question. At Honda, the designers who design cars for a specific age segment must themselves be from that age group.

To date, several researchers have suggested ways to empathize with target audiences through marketing research:

1. Leonard and Rayport (1997) suggests empathy through observation of target consumers.
2. Fortini-Campbell (1998) suggests a dramaturgical approaches in which marketers employ devices used by method actors to help them identify more fully with people they are to portray.
3. Keats (in Margulies 1984) describes Shakespeare’s “negative capability”, that is, his ability to subvert his own identity and get more fully into the characters he brings alive in his writings.
4. Arnould and Wallendorf (1994) suggest ethnographic approaches in which marketers live with and literally become target buyers.

To return to our original questions, do designers and developers of creative products and services empathize with their targets? If they do, how do they do it? What are their implicit theories of how their audiences experience their work? How do they envision them becoming aware of it and interacting with it?

METHOD

To explore these questions, an approach similar to Kover’s was used although a broader range of creative people were interviewed. Specifically, the research consisted of 9 in-depth interviews of creative workers. These included two interior designers,

one architect, two stand-up comedians, three automobile designers and one fashion consultant. The fashion consultant sold a line of high-end clothing out of her home on a seasonal basis to 260 women clients and had become very good at anticipating which items and combinations of items each client would find appealing based on her knowledge of that client. All respondents were at least 35 years old and had worked for at least 15 years in their respective fields. All were male except the fashion consultant and the architect. All were very successful in their fields and could point to backgrounds which included extensive training, “working their way up”, prizes and recognition. The auto designers were heads of the design departments in the three largest US car companies.

Each interview lasted about an hour and was based on these types of questions:

- How did you get into this business?
- How do you get ideas?
- How did you come up with your last design concept? Your last really successful concept?
- How do you know when your ideas will “click”?
- Which segments or types of buyers are you most comfortable creating for? Least?
- What type of information about buyers do you find most helpful in terms of creating new content they will like?

RESULTS

This research, like Kover’s, is exploratory and therefore suggestive rather than conclusive. There were, however, some interesting insights.

First, in spite of the fact that all of the respondents were creative experts, the nature of their jobs highlighted some differences. In Figure 1, there is a continuum which illustrates these differences.

In Figure 1, workers on the left side are in much more direct contact with buyers, and, very importantly, are initially *contacted by the buyers*. As one interior designer said, “Hey, they hired me.” This gives them more power, or, as one interior designer said, “It lets us drive the bus.” They have time to educate their buyers, and can form close relationships with them. In fact, if an interior decorator or fashion consultant is liked personally by a client, this has a big impact on whether the client likes the creative work. As one interior designer said, “this is basically a selling job.” The interior designers and the fashion consultant stressed the importance of buyer trust, that is, that if they had the buyer’s trust, they had a great deal of creative freedom. This issue comes up in a lot of contemporary literature on branding since high trust brands are given more leeway by consumers to come up with more varied offerings (see Kraft foods in Keller 2003). A stand-up comedian knows from his “first hit” or first successful joke if a crowd likes him personally or not. If he is liked, he has a lot of latitude, or as one comedian said, “now *you* (audience) are *mine*.”

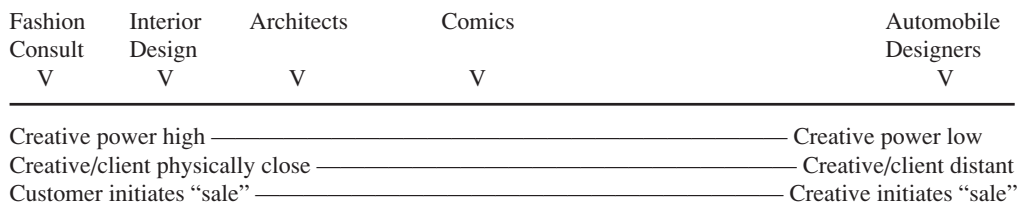
At the other extreme, the car designers have to be intrusive to get the attention of buyers, they have to initiate the contact. Commitment on the buyers’ part is much lower because the relationship is much less personal. It is therefore harder to know what will click with individual buyers.

There were, however, some interesting commonalities across all creative workers.

All knew from a young age (about 10) that they were headed for creative careers. Even as youngsters, they had special abilities to imagine or see in their minds novel forms and combinations. One of the comedians, for example, was black. As a child in school, he was often in trouble and was assigned to clean the erasers. He could look at the erasers, see the white chalk dust, then see a funny

FIGURE 1

Relative placement of creative workers in terms of closeness to customer, initiator of sales transactions, and customer commitment.



possibility: put the dust on his face, sing an Al Jolson song for his teacher, make her laugh, and then get out of the assignment. (It worked). Similarly, the automobile designers seem to imply that their work was superior to that of artists insofar as artists "make copies of something already there, like they paint a lake" whereas designers "have to imagine a visual form first in their mind, then put it on paper." One of the interior designers noted that he has a "special ability to see in his mind how a room will look once it is completely furnished and decorated."

At the same time, all of the creative workers seemed to work in the same sequence. Nearly all of their projects followed three steps:

1. Assess
2. Create
3. Present

All seek first to understand the target, then create, then go through a big moment of truth or the major presentation of the creative work. At each of the three stages, however, there are systematic ways that all workers gather input from their audiences and use this to form theories about what will click.

1. ASSESSMENT

Note first that none of the workers spoke of using empathy with their buyers. Even when told how advertising copywriters will "become" an individual buyer and respond do their work from the buyers' perspective, none of them said they imagined themselves in the place of their buyers. The writer even spoke with a copywriter once from a large New York City agency who said "I imagine the dumbest guy in my high school class reading my lines back to me." Still this type of review of one's work is not true among the creative workers studied here.

Even the comedians, while they were very sensitive to audience responses, did not evaluate joke ideas by deliberately taking the perspective of audience members. Jerry Seinfeld recently noted that many effective stand-up comics tend to be somewhat arrogant, so it is not surprising that they are not interested in "becoming" their audience to evaluate joke reactions.

However, in the assessment phase, all creative workers use methods that are very familiar to market researchers:

Ask about needs:

Interior designers, automobile designers, and architects simply ask buyers what they want.

Use test stimuli:

Interior designers will ask clients to react to swatches of wall paper and pictures of specific rooms, and comedians have collections of test jokes they throw out at the beginning of a show, mainly in order to see how liberal or conservative the audience will be. Everyone worries about threshold points, that is, the points at which a joke is too anti-conservative, a car design is too radical, or a room plan is too contemporary.

Ask about the past:

Interior designers ask clients to tell them all of the changes in their homes they have made over the years, and auto designers probe the meanings of favorite past cars. This information tells the creative people "where people are headed in their interior decoration" and the car histories tell auto designers what were the emotional hot buttons or archetypal car styles in target owner histories.

Observe:

All creative workers were acute observers of audience reactions. Many reactions are easy to see and understand. If, for example, an audience feels that a joke was too critical of a politician, the audience will go "ooooooooohh." All creative workers look for changes in audience body language, mood level, and any other signs of interest or disinterest in the material. Comedians feel that different crowds have different personalities, and are loath to work a room where the audience has drunk too much or have been up too late. The latter audiences are usually too sluggish and too tired to get many jokes.

In short, most creative workers absorb a great deal of information about their audiences and all the things they are involved with in their daily lives. All people interviewed in this study were very well-read, all used terms from psychology and sociology to speak of their audiences, and the automobile designers were very familiar with all of the latest consumer understanding tools, from ethnographic research to the Zaltman and Higie ZMET technique (1995). Interestingly, they were also very good at remembering bits of learning about audience members and their lives. One interior designer said "I could come to your house and next week remember every piece in your living room", and one of the comics said that a year from now, he would be able to remember even the smallest bits of the interview. The more they can remember, the more fuel they can call upon to make creative associations.

Of all the information they valued in order to understand buyer motivations and sense "where they could take their audiences"

through their creativity, the most useful information seemed to deal with target self-images. *Each creative worker develops creative content mainly in terms of how it will impact individual audience member self-images or perceptions.* If they could rely on any piece of information about their audience—everything from demographics to values to socioeconomic levels— this seems to be the most important information.

The designer of the PT Cruiser automobile said that it was designed to enhance small car drivers' self-perceptions:

“(being) in the small car market is very defeating to a customer. Every time you come to a red light, because the culture is really defining you by scale, where it is status to have something larger, a large home, a larger office, large TV...all of that is defining where your position is...(so, with the PT Cruiser)..Why not create a product that’s judged on a completely different rulebook...where somebody looking at it, instead of saying ‘That’s a small car’ they say, ‘That’s a neat car’.”

The fashion consultant said her job is mainly to make women “feel good about themselves.” She said, “You are helping them feel good, and when a woman puts on an outfit and she feels good, she’s on top of the world.”

The comedians said they have to be constantly aware of who they are addressing and *how that audience views itself*. One comic said simply, “people like to laugh at themselves.” When telling funny stories to Jewish audiences, you are not going to get laughs unless you are telling jokes about Jewish people. Both of the comics were in their 40s and were generally reluctant to perform for college audiences. This is because college students, as one comic said, “do not like being hit too much with the adult world and what it’s (going to be) like when their parents stop paying for this (college life).” College students like comics that push simple prop-oriented humor (wigs, funny hats) much more than stories about adults. Black audiences prefer jokes about black people and black neighborhoods (as opposed to the “white” black humor of people like Bill Cosby). The worst audience to perform in front of would be an audience of male politicians and their wives, all in formal attire. An audience of this type, the comics said, would be too self-conscious to laugh at anything and would be a comic’s nightmare.

2. CREATIVITY

All the creative workers said they do a wide range of creative work, from routine, mundane, direct customer-oriented innovations to breakthrough, “out there”, one-of-a-kind creations. For the interior designers, working in traditional design areas (Queen Anne, Georgian) tended to be the routine, less challenging, more formulaic work. They said this work was OK, but they most enjoyed contemporary interior designs.

The car designers say their work ranges from simple redesigns of current models to completely free designs where their bosses say, “come up with a design for any type of car that you personally would want”. The latter designs are the concept cars, designs which can lead to one-off prototypes which are shown at auto shows to gauge public reactions. The comics have standard jokes—but envy famous comics such as George Carlin who can do extreme material from a very biased political viewpoint and get away with it.

As Csikszentmihalyi (1996) would say, this is when creative people get into the flow or zone. For many, this is a retreat to someplace inside themselves. One of the car designers noted how Mozart could hear music in his mind, then write it down. This designer said he can “see” new car designs in his mind which he then puts on paper. One of the interior designers said he likes contempo-

rary designs because “it’s more cerebral...more challenging...and I enjoy the challenge.” Oddly, the comics are most in the flow when they are on stage, performing. Many admit they do not write much material beforehand but rather make it up as much as half of it on stage. Apparently, improvisational comedy is a major part of many of their acts.

How does a sense of their market enter into this stage?

All creative workers rely on a set of aesthetic criteria, or, put differently, a set of criteria of well-formedness which is fundamental in their field. These criteria relate to natural human predispositions, to universal human desires for things like balance, harmony, and proportion. In a joke, the proportion of the time spent leading to the punch line must be in direct proportion to the funniness of the punch line itself. One of the car designers said,

“There are excellent proportions in the beauty of the human form. We are all sensitized (to this) because we grow up with humans..and see them all the time (so)..It is more of a subconscious recognition. There is an instant recognition of what is out of proportion (versus) there is a subconscious recognition of harmony. In the car business, there are some rules. You have to play with proportions. The market will accept very very new stuff as long as the proportions are quantified, as long as there is a harmony to the vehicle.”

One of the interior designers spoke of design “logic”:

“When you are designing a home or a room for a client—yes, it’s creative in that you have the option of selecting (from) all these different options—but there is a logic to it. Like, in western music, there are certain ways to write the sonata form. There is a basic structure...like the colors...the proportions of the furniture. That’s where the fun is.”

All designers, of course, have systems of overlays where they can sketch a new design on transparent paper, lay over a new sheet to make changes, then another new sheet, etc. to get the proportions they want (all mostly done by computer today). Interestingly, it took a long time to transcribe the interviews of the comics because of the way they spoke. They don’t speak in unbroken sentences but rather will start to say something, then start to say it again in a different way, and then a different way altogether. What they are doing is fine tuning, trying to get just the right words to communicate the best pattern of images in their story-telling.

Research by Veryzer (1993) has probed consumers’ desires for ideal forms and universal proportions. Further research in this area might be very beneficial to creative workers. Some of the car designers and the interior designers deliberately research target buyers’ feelings about proportions and aesthetics. In studying Buick buyers, for example, one car designer said he likes to look in their homes:

I find it very valuable (that) when you do in someone’s house, and the couch is always centered with the wall, and the end tables are centered to the couch, and the hierarchy of the lamp to the couch to the wall to the frame on the picture is so symmetrical and hierarchical. *That* is good information about a Buick customer.”

One way creative workers learn about ideal forms and proportions is, of course, through their artistic training. Also, all of the creative workers interviewed in this study spent a lot of time comparing notes with other creative workers in their fields.

3. PRESENTATION

According to all the workers interviewed, this stage is absolutely crucial in the success of a new design, joke, or clothing outfit. Like flying a plane, design work is full of tension, and car designers say that when their design is a hit with the public “this plane has really landed.” This is the goal for car designs, room designs, and all kinds of jokes. One of the car designers said that he does not like predictable car design evolutions but rather wants to surprise and delight:

“I call that (predictable car designs) ‘playing checkers’. In other words, the moves are very simple. (Whereas) What you really want is *chess*....where the moves are not so predictable....and you (viewer or opponent) think, ‘*Jeez*, where did that come from?’”

One of the interior designers did a project and got the reaction from his clients: “Wow! We can’t believe you came up with that!” When the other interior designer told a client “Let’s move the grand piano away from that window”, the client resisted saying, “My mother played that piano there in 1947.” After the piano was moved, the designer said, “It was like a revelation, it was hysterical...Out of nowhere, their home was reborn.”

In fact, the interior designers know they are trusting them to move them pleasantly into the “moment of presentation” (or “truth”), so these designers call this a “leap of faith” on the part of the clients. They report that clients call them and say, “I can *not* believe this is my living room...It’s beautiful...I’m thrilled to pieces!” If they are designing something radical for a client, these designers will “bring them along” slowly showing them each piece of furniture over a period of days, getting their agreement, so the final result is pleasing. When a piece of furniture is too different from expectations, they say clients experience “furniture shock.”

The comedians were scrupulous about room layout and about observing audience reactions. One was fanatical about the room he would be working in: “I can almost sense going into a room if I am going to do well that night. The biggest thing..is the physical layout.” He had a long list of requirements about which he was fanatical: the audience had to be at least 2 feet away from him, the room very dark, bright spotlight *on him*, everyone seated (no one up at bars, bathrooms), excellent sound system, tables cleared, no food, not a lot of alcohol, no distractions.” In order for him to make his “connection” he had to have the *complete attention* of the audience— as opposed to music, he said, which can get by with just being “background.” He said he can tell in the first 3 minutes of his routine if the audience will like him and his jokes. The first successful joke is called “the first hit” and sets the stage for the rest of the routine. In spite of the difficulty in seeing beyond bright spotlights, all comedians monitor audience sounds, body language, and of course laughter very carefully.

SUMMARY

This project is the first part of a large scale study of how creative workers co-create meaning with consumers. It focuses on the first step: how creatives interpret consumer motivations. If it is possible to understand how these people conceptualize audience wants and needs and reactions regarding creative offerings, this would facilitate many things:

Researchers who study consumer needs regarding creative products would have clearer direction regarding issues and information which are most helpful to creatives.

These researchers might also be better equipped to come up with creative content themselves, that is, be able to highlight findings which have leverageable creative implications.

This is an area of considerable opportunity. The heart of marketing is about correctly identifying consumer issues which creative people can leverage in creative, new advertising, package designs, pricing plans, distribution plans, and sales plans.

Based on the this research, researchers will be able to help creative workers in these areas if they help them get a deeper understanding of (1.) consumer self-concept definitions and how these change, (2.) universal consumer definitions of aesthetics, proportions and “well-formedness”, and (3.) consumer reactions at initial “moment of truth” presentations of creative offerings.

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The Interplay Between Archetypes and Autobiography in Mass Media Preferences

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ABSTRACT

The present research utilized a reader-response approach to explore the preferences consumers have for motion pictures and television shows. Analytical emphasis was placed upon the semiotic features contained within consumers' favorite films and programs, especially those of an archetypic and/or mythic nature. It was found that consumers typically intertwined aspects of their autobiographical narratives with story structures and archetypic figures drawn from their favorite mass media texts. Among these were the figures of the Low Born Hero, the Corrupted Hero, the Warrior, the Good Father and Utopia. Preferred motion picture and television narratives were also used to overcome implicit oppositions consumers encountered in life, such as the Real versus the Ideal, the Self versus Others and Choice versus Chance.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, consumer researchers have directed increased attention toward the ways in which the mass media affect consumers' everyday lives (Holbrook 1999; O'Guinn and Shrum 1997; Ritson and Elliott 1999). In particular, the *reader-response* approach (Eco 1981) has been identified as having large potential for enhancing our comprehension of how mass media products, such as motion pictures and television shows, are incorporated into consumers' self identities and social interactions. (Drotner 1994; Mick and Buhl 1992; Moores 1991; Radway 1988, 1984; Scott 1994a). As Holbrook (1999) and McQuarrie and Mick (1999) propose, while *quantitative* and *text interpretive* methods of assessing mass media influence are undoubtedly valuable, they are no substitute for the rich insights that can be gained by talking directly to consumers about their media preferences and desires.

Holbrook (1999, p. 154), for example, concludes after presenting a highly detailed quantitative analysis of motion picture preferences that, "There may well be other movie characteristics not included here that tend to enhance both popular appeal and expert judgments... These factors would include the character of a movie's story line... the development of certain themes or motifs... the design of a film's semiotic structure and semiological signification, e.g., binary oppositions vs. subtle graduations, myths or archetypes, metaphoric meanings, [and] consumption symbolism...

The present research utilized a reader response approach to explore the preferences consumers have for motion pictures and television shows. Following from Holbrook's (1999) proposals, analytical emphasis was placed upon the semiotic features (Mick 1986; Holbrook and Grayson 1986) contained within consumers' favorite films and programs, especially those of an archetypic and/or mythic nature (see e.g., Scott 1994b; Stern 1995). While consumer researchers have examined the archetypic and mythic content of these mass media offerings previously (Hirschman 1987; 2000; Holbrook and Grayson 1986), they have not done so using consumer-based data. As already noted, consumers' notions concerning their own preferences are a key (perhaps *the* key) element in our understanding of those preferences.

Mass media narratives such as motion pictures and television shows may serve as carriers of contemporary cultural archetypes, according to Gibbs (1994), and Moores (1993). Filmmakers, scriptwriters and even advertising copywriters (see Randazzo 1995; Scott 1994b; Stern 1988) draw upon the pre-existing stock of these cultural images to construct their narratives.

Additionally, both Dyer (1982, 1986) and McCracken (1989) have proposed that actors and actresses could be used to personify social categories in a culture. For example, Eco (1966) argues that during the 1960's actor Sean Connery came to signify the warrior character James Bond, just as Dyer (1986) claims that Marilyn Monroe iconically represented the seductive goddess archetype during the 1950's and 1960's. Dyer (1986, p. 16-17) proposes that, "Stars represent typical ways of behaving, feeling and thinking in contemporary society, ways that have been socially, culturally and historically constructed... Stars are embodiments of the social categories in which people are placed and through which we make our lives..." Thus, film and television narratives may be texts which carry archetypal meanings with which consumers can implicitly identify (Randazzo 1995; Stern 1988).

THE STUDY

The present study explores the possibility that consumers' preferred motion pictures and television shows are chosen based upon archetypic personification, which assists the consumer in composing his/her autobiographical narrative. Archetypes may provide the shared *cognitive* and *social* context (Ritson and Elliott 1999; Zaltman 2000) through which mass media products such as motion pictures and television shows are given meaning in the consumer's life and used in his/her project of identity construction (see also; Gibbs 1994).

METHOD

Data for the study were generated by means of phenomenological interviews with 24 volunteer participants who were assured of anonymity. The participants were of diverse gender, ethnicity, age and religious affiliation. The interviewer used a six- question protocol to initiate and guide the discussion.¹ Dialogue centered around the consumer's favorite films, television shows, actors and actresses.

Each interview was conducted in the participant's place of residence with only the participant and the researcher present. The interviews began by asking the participant to simply "tell the story" of his/her favorite film. All participants were eager to do this, and often continued their initial narrative rendition for half an hour with little or no assistance by the researcher. Because of the involving and seemingly enjoyable nature of the task, participants continued through the subsequent questions and discussion enthusiastically, responding to each of the general questions in a lengthy and detailed manner. Interviews took a minimum of 1 1/2 hours, some went as long as 3 hours.

Interpretive Procedures and Logic of Analysis

The analysis of the verbatim interview transcripts involved an iterative, part-to-whole reading strategy through which I worked toward a holistic understanding of each person's transcript, while also making note of common themes, especially those of an

¹These questions were: What is your favorite motion picture? Can you tell me what it was about? What are some of your other favorite movies? Who are your favorite movie actors and actresses? What do you think about—; What does s/he mean to you? (Repeat for television shows).

archetypal and autobiographical nature, across the set of transcripts. In this process, earlier readings of a transcript were used to inform later readings and, reciprocally, later readings allowed me to recognize and explore patterns not noted in the initial analysis. The archetypal categories were compared with those developed previously by Campbell, Eliade and Jung during their extensive studies of comparative mythology. Additional metaphoric concepts were also discerned which related to recent findings on cognitive categorization (e.g. Gibbs 1994; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Zaltman 2000) and celebrity meaning transfer (Dyer 1986; McCracken 1986) and were classified into groupings for further analysis.

Following from Bruner (1990, 1986, 1987), I was interested in learning how these 24 consumers, coming from different age cohorts, ethnic backgrounds, and sexual identities, incorporated the narratives presented by motion pictures and television shows into autobiographical narratives of selfhood. By focusing attention on their favorite texts, I hoped to gain insight into how these stories were interwoven with their own life themes and life projects (Mick and Buhl 1992). I found that respondents were especially prone to narrate particular experiences in their lives, often where there had been a breach between the real and the ideal, or the self and society.

ARCHETYPE, AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND BI-POLAR MEDIATION

To Jung, every archetype coexisted with its shadow/opposite and through the deployment of these opposites in narratives, people were able to define patterns of meaning-in-the-world. One task of a narrative, whether a widely-shared myth such as the Biblical story of creation, or a small-scale exposition, such as an episode of a television series, is to enable us to work through these oppositions—to bring them into balance. For example, consumers may use television or motion picture narratives to bring evil into balance with good or to bring personal achievement into balance with helping others (Gibbs 1994). In a particular situation, the consumer may seek out a narrative which frames a set of characters in such a way as to construct a satisfying explanatory outcome.

Across the set of interviews, three primary oppositional themes were identified: the Ideal versus the Real, the Self versus Others and Choice versus Chance. These are consistent with the autobiographical themes identified by Riessman (1993) in her ethnographic work and by consumer researchers such as Thompson (1996) and Wallendorf and Arnould (1991) in their studies on working women and Thanksgiving rituals, respectively. I demonstrate and extend them now using material from the motion picture/television show interviews.

THE IDEAL VERSUS THE REAL

Predating Plato's conception (1959) of Ideal Forms by several thousand years, the epic Sumerian myth of Gilgamesh also proposed the existence of a perfect, idealized world which contrasted with the flawed reality occupied by humans: "There was the Garden of the Gods; all around him stood bushes bearing gems. Seeing it, Gilgamesh went down at once, for there was fruit of carnelian on the vine, beautiful to look at; lapis lazuli leaves hung thick with fruit, sweet to see. Instead of thorns and thistles, there were hematite and rare stones, agate and pearls from the sea" (*Gilgamesh*, Leeming, 1990 p. 288).

The perfection, richness and beauty which Gilgamesh beheld in the land of the gods is archetypically equivalent to consumers' descriptions of utopian scenes in motion pictures such as *Easter Parade* and *White Christmas*. Rose, a 66 year old woman, recalls the musicals of her childhood, which featured Ginger Rogers and

Fred Astaire, and represented the same beauty and perfection: "I used to like to watch Fred Astaire dance with Ginger Rogers and imagine I was dancing with him in those beautiful gowns...I was a very quiet girl and those movies always made me forget myself...[I loved] the singing and dancing and the beautiful costumes, the make believe world. You forgot your real world; you forgot what was happening in your own life...It was make believe, but it made you forget and it made you happy."

Becky, a 26 year old eighth grade math and geography teacher, found the same utopian realm in *The Wizard of Oz*, "It's a fantasy. It's just so wonderful that there's such a wonderful place in this world, or not even in this world—just a place where you can go to. Like in Dorothy's song, where there's no troubles, no sorrows, somewhere over the rainbow." Although the archetype of utopia remains constant across these consumers, its autobiographical expression is personalized and unique. For each of us, different 'perfect worlds' will be found in the mass media narratives we find most resonant.

The Real versus Ideal theme expresses itself through deviation from perfection. We come to know what is perfect by encountering what is imperfect; we come to know what is good by having knowledge of what is evil; without contrast, there is no meaning (Eliade 1991). Thus, consumers told of deviations from perfection, of wrongs, of errors, of flaws in order to make more clearly defined their sense of rightness.

Daniel, age 16, recounts the story of his favorite film, *The Crow*.

Basically there's a man and his name is Eric Draven. He's going to get married. And that day his fiancée, who was going to be his wife the next day, gets raped and killed by a band of men that go around on devil's night, which is October 30th, and they loot, raid and steal, and pillage, plunder, light things on fire, blow things up and rape women in the process...They were running like a crack joint in the apartment building where she lives. And she was hindering their business, so they had to come and take care of her. So when she's getting raped, the boyfriend comes in and tries to stop it, but they both get killed, and he gets thrown out of the window and shot. One year later a crow lands on his grave, because supposedly when the person's soul comes back, the person comes back to life. And what happens is he comes back to life and he avenges those who raped and killed his wife and killed him. So, justice is served.

In this film, a terrible injustice has occurred, a major flaw in the normal course-of-life has appeared and requires an equally emphatic response to move back to a balanced state. Thus, the murdered man destroys those who acted first as destroyers—i.e., as sources of imperfection.

Interviewees also believed that balance between the Real and the Ideal could be achieved by the death/sacrifice of a good (perfect) person which served to atone for a moral deficiency. Leeming (1990) terms this the *martyr myth* and it is a structural form underlying many "dying god" texts and the source of the notion that "out of something bad, something good may come." As Leeming (1990, p. 147) notes, "the dying god or his surrogate is often a scapegoat; one who dies for the good of society, who somehow takes on the burden of society's shortcomings or sins." We see this structure in Vickie's (32) retelling of *West Side Story*:

And Maria is running in the street looking for Tony and they finally see each other and they go running towards each other

and that's when Maria's brother's best friend comes out and shoots Tony. And it's very, very sad. They sing a beautiful song together, "Somewhere", and they hope that they'll meet each other in another life, and he dies in her arms. The two gangs are standing there in the background...and then both gangs come together to carry Tony away. And that's the end... And it moved me a lot, seeing two people who cared so much about each other and how one got killed at such an early age and how the two gangs came together. After something bad happens, something good comes of it. Unfortunately something bad has to happen first, before something good happens.

The contrast between the Real and the Ideal can manifest itself also in specific pairs of archetypes, for example the Destructive Goddess and the Nurturant Goddess. The Destructive Goddess is the negative, violent aspect of the anima, the female principle (Jung 1959); it can destroy life, especially male life. Iconic forms of the Destructive Goddess include Lilith, Jezebel, Medusa, the evil Queen in *Snow White*, witches, Ann Bancroft's character Mrs. Robinson in *Graduate*, and Marlene Dietrich in *The Blue Angel*.

By contrast, the helpful, good aspect of the anima is represented by the Nurturant Goddess archetype and includes maternal icons such as Donna Reed and Betty Crocker (Randazzo 1995), the Virgin Mary, Artemis, and Ceres (Bierlein 1994). In this form, the female principle represents all that is fertile, nurturant, caring, loving and kind (see e.g., Jung 1959, Leeming 1990). One participant, for instance, saw actress Jane Seymour as representing this archetype.

Characters who begin as one aspect of the bipolar Real/Ideal archetype may be transformed into the other aspect over the course of the narrative. Lisa, 22, describes two female characters who underwent just such a transformation. The first is a teenage character, Kelly, on the television program, *Beverly Hills 90210*: "Kelly was the rich girl, and her mother was doing drugs She drove around in her red BMW convertible, and flaunted her money And she just bought whatever she wanted. She was a real spoiled brat, and she thought she was better than anybody else. But somehow her character grew, and now she's totally different...Now she's like all straight-laced and she's a good girl, and she does everything by the rules and she doesn't flaunt her money...She's generous and likes to help people." Analogously, Lisa describes how the Julia Robert's character in the film *Pretty Woman* was transformed from a hardened prostitute into a "good" woman: "She turned herself around from a prostitute into a beautiful, respected woman, and they fell in love."

In general, the motion picture and television show narratives which consumers described as their favorites were those in which the imperfect Real was moved towards the perfect Ideal over the course of the story. (Although there were exceptions; one woman described the poignant tragedy of *Leaving Las Vegas* as evidence that sometimes "things just don't work out in the end; love doesn't always fix everything.") However, the majority preferred happy endings which provided them with the psychological buoyancy and optimism to keep their own travails in perspective. Mike, a 36 year old man, saw an important "message for living" in Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*, a melodrama starring actor Jimmy Stewart.

The effect that it has had on me is based on my life; life has a lot of ups and downs. Being that I'm 36, I've gone through a lot of ups and downs...You're never riding high or you're never low all the time, but you have a lot of peaks and valleys and this movie... gave me a frame of reference to say don't just look at what's going on currently, don't look at your life in the

last day, the last week, the last month, the last year; look at all the positive things that you've experienced throughout your life and how things can be even better in the future. And being that I'm self-employed, I always have to be motivated to do well in my business...I think it's a great, great story ... that maybe you should look at your whole life and what impact you've had to help others and how maybe others have helped you.

Mike's comments bring us to the second theme discerned across the interviews: fulfilling the self versus caring for others.

THE SELF VERSUS OTHERS

The Good Mother and Good Father archetypes (Bierlein 1994; Randazzo 1995) represent the fully matured psyche which places the needs of others ahead of one's own. Often young people will envision themselves as the central focus of their autobiographical narrative; all of their emotional, mental, and physical energies are directed toward achieving personal goals. For example, one young man's autobiographical narrative was largely self-directed, aimed toward guiding him to be "the best that I can be".

Conversely, Sam, a middle-aged man who had family responsibilities, directed his self-narrative toward the Nurturant Parent motif (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). His admiration was directed toward those who risk themselves to help needy others; whose goals are concerned more with 'giving back' rather than 'getting ahead': Many of the women interviewed by Thompson (1996) exhibited this same self/others tension. This tension is perhaps especially pronounced for contemporary women, because the Good Mother/Nurturant Goddess archetype, which for so long prevailed as the female cultural ideal, has evolved into a more animus-pervaded androgyny which encourages women to set and fulfill personal goals beyond those of family care and nurturance. Women are now precariously balanced (or "juggling" as Thompson (1996) phrases it) between self-serving quests and other-serving obligations.

Among the consumers I interviewed, these same tensions were also apparent. For example, Janet, 25 and unmarried, commented upon the character played by Susan Sarandon in *Pretty Baby*. In the film, Sarandon played a prostitute with two children. Given the opportunity to marry a wealthy man and leave prostitution, she does so, taking her young son with her. But she abandons her older child, a daughter, leaving her to become a prostitute. Janet comments, "She played a hooker with children in a brothel in the South...You hated her because she was not doing the right thing by her child, but you could still understand that she had to live her own life and take care of herself."

While looking out for oneself is the initial stage in psychological development, the second one is reciprocity for which the *community* or *family* is the symbolic archetype. In this stage, the tension between self and others is brought into balance by a system of mutual support in which community members share resources, benefiting the collective whole. Lisa, age 22 and unmarried, described her favorite television show as representing the community archetype. "What I liked about *Laverne and Shirley* was that they were two independent women and they didn't have to rely on anybody else...I guess that's when the whole feminist movement was going on...I was just a little girl and it was good to see women being strong like that...And no matter what went wrong, they always had each other and they could always depend on each other...I guess it was like their little family." Lisa describes a balanced structure which blends aspects of self-serving versus other-serving behavior. Laverne and Shirley are each seeking freedom from the prior restraints placed upon women by working

and living apart from their families; but they have also formed a mutual-aid community which supports each woman in her search for selfhood.

Charles, age 21 and unmarried, belongs to a similar mutual-support community composed of both men and women. His favorite television show is *Friends*, which depicts a slightly older, mixed-gender group who are working at “first” jobs and living in an urban apartment building. To Charles, the show has both positive and negative aspects as an archetypal model for his own group’s future behavior.

Every now and then I get kind of depressed considering they are all 28, 26, 27 and they are still all single. I’m thinking they are great people. It would be nice to live like that, but by that time, personally, I would like to be in a relationship and have kids or something. At the same time, I like it because it almost mirrors my group of friends. There are 3 men and 3 women in my little group of friends. A lot of times we look at [the show] and think about it. If I do end up 28 or in a couple of years when we graduate from college, I’d like to have that common bond with my friends. They definitely care a lot for each other. “I’ll be there for you” is their theme song. They can always do things with each other and without each other as well. They always have fun when they are together, which is something I hope I have with my friends as well.

Charles views his future self down the road and realizes that eventually he will want to move away from the Community archetype toward the Nurturant Parent archetype. He does not want to remain indefinitely in a state of extended adolescence, but rather sees the time approaching when he will want to be a provider of resources to his children, rather than merely a sharer of resources with his friends (Gilmore 1997).

Mike, age 36 and married with children, has progressed in his autobiographical narrative towards the Nurturant Parent archetype. His favorite motion picture, *It’s a Wonderful Life*, tells the story of George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart), a man whose generosity and pattern of putting others’ needs ahead of his own make him an iconic exemplar.

In the first part of the movie he and his younger brother were ... sledding down a slope, and the sled tipped over and his younger brother fell into a big pile of water, like a hole with ice, and George saved his life. But because George saved his brother’s life, he lost the hearing in one of his ears....[Later] George’s father suffers a heart attack, I believe, and dies. George had plans at that time; he just got married, he was ready to go on his honeymoon with his wife, but they needed him to stay to save the Building and Loan because many people depended on him to help. So he gave up his honeymoon with his wife. And the whole movie symbolizes how he gave up a lot of his own goals and his own aspirations. He had to help his brother, his younger brother, who went to college. George didn’t have the ability to go to college, because he had to help with the Building and Loan and help his mom. So the whole movie showed how he gave up and sacrificed his life to help so many other people, and he was constantly doing that.

George Bailey is a contemporary representation of the Nurturant Parent archetype. He is a “good man”; one who can always be counted upon to assist others. George’s life also resembles the Dying God narrative pattern—for example, a significant part of him ‘died’, i.e., he lost half his hearing, in saving his brother’s life. And he has sacrificed other emotional/psychic aspects of himself (for

instance, a honeymoon, a college education) in order to rescue the town and its people from dying economically.

Mike’s retelling of *It’s a Wonderful Life* suggests that much of what happens to its protagonist, George Bailey, is caused by events that were beyond his control; for example, his brother’s near-drowning, his father’s fatal heart attack. Faced with these uncontrollable negative occurrences, George must choose either to forego his own desires and set things right again, or to pursue his own interests and walk away from the consequences of the destructive events. This narrative structure reveals a third archetypic tension described by the interviewees—that between Choice and Chance, to which we now turn.

CHOICE AND CHANCE

One young man, Julio’s, account of the film *Cool Runnings* describes with poignance the plight of the Jamaican bobsled team who, having conquered extraordinary obstacles to reach the finals in the Olympics, lose their victory to a broken screw. Julio also describes the tragic helplessness of the protagonist in *Carlito’s Way* who, despite sincere efforts to ‘go straight’, is dragged back into a life of crime and ultimately to his death. Similarly, Stern’s (1995) re-analysis of Wallendorf and Arnould’s (1992) Thanksgiving data showed how consumers’ tales could turn on unexpectedly fortuitous or destructive events that helped/hindered their holiday plans.

The consumers I interviewed described the same bipolar conflict between Choice and Chance in recounting their favorite films and television shows. Charles, age 20, tells about *Melrose Place*:

One of the characters they have now is Jane Mancini...She started out as Michael Mancini’s wife, ... they got divorced. She was pretty much a normal average housewife type woman, but she turned psychotic once he divorced her and she got raped by one of her boyfriends. She tends to go for guys who will somehow take advantage of her. It turned out she killed the guy who raped her. Now she’s discovered she’s adopted and she’s looking for her mother...Then there is her sister, Sydney. She is completely jealous of anything Jane ever had or did. When she first came on the show Jane and Michael were divorced and Sydney went right away for Michael. She had always had a thing for her sister’s ex-husband... She’s always getting into trouble. She used to be a prostitute...She joined a cult ... She’s always doing the wrong thing...She’s cunning, but still she is always getting into trouble.

Charles’ description of the two sisters, Jane and Sydney, displays a mixture of planned and unplanned events which move the story along. Sydney, for instance, purposely set out to have sex with her sister’s husband, but Jane’s psychotic response to her own divorce was not “chosen”. The presence of randomness in mass media narratives helps people deal with apparent injustices in the course of their own or others’ lives: i.e., when bad things happen to good people or when wickedness profits, one can assign it to the archetype of Happenstance/chance.

However, the lack of planning, of not at least *attempting* to control one’s destiny, is generally understood as consistently leading to negative results (Leeming 1990). Tom, age 21, finds a lesson-for-life in the film *Clerks*.

It’s basically a film based around a day in the life of a clerk of a convenience store and what happens in his life. I think one of the reasons I like it is because I related so much to the person. I mean, I have a lot of friends who aren’t moving in the same direction that I am in college, and now have these dead-end

TABLE
Possible Archetypic and Demographic Patterns

<u>Age</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Archetypes</u>
16-25	Male	Single	Low-Born Hero, Prince, Corrupted Hero, Redeemed Hero
25-30	Male	Single	Cooperative Community
30-55	Male	Married w Children	Good Father, Wise Guide,
16-25	Female	Single	Justice, Martyr Warrior, Seductress, Princess, Cooperative Community, Utopia
25-45	Female	Married w Children	Nurturant Goddess, Warrior, Martyr
45-65	Female	Married, Empty Nest	Princess, Nurturant Goddess Utopia

clerk type jobs. It's pretty interesting to see the movie, because it's very true to life. It's a very good study into the lives of people who are kind of middle-class growing up, but then they kind of piss their life away working these bad jobs, living at home, never getting a career together, whereas their parents have something going for themselves. It's pretty interesting to see that.

Later in his interview, Tom recounts instances of setting goals for himself and then succeeding through trial and error in reaching them (in essence, a heroic quest). Much like Julio, Tom constructs his personal narrative as an attempt to balance planning for the future against anticipating the random, often negative, occurrences of life. His autobiographical philosophy is expressed well in his closing comments on *Clerks*.

- I. What happens at the end of the movie? It just goes on?
 T. Yeah, basically at the end of the movie he's still a clerk. It's very true to life.
 Nothing great happens. He doesn't like inherit a million dollars or anything. The only thing he realized is that there's this girl, and he realized that she's the one for him. It's no big deal really. But you never know what will happen. It's left very open ended, very true to life.

DISCUSSION

This research has explored the incorporation of archetypic figures in consumers' recounted descriptions of their favorite motion pictures and television shows. The narratives generated during discussion of these mass media preferences exhibited many autobiographical details, suggesting that consumers used archetypic imagery and mythic narrative structure, such as utopia, in viewing their own lives and social interactions.

The primary archetypic categories and story structures put forward by these consumers are shown in the Table. The patterns suggest that the type of heroic identification may shift over the life course. Young adults, both male and female, may identify with motion picture and television show characters who are struggling to establish personal identities and overcome obstacles to self-development and fulfillment, just as they themselves are doing. Older persons, who have established families and found their niches in the community, may turn to archetypic figures that portray nurturing others, protecting the community from harm, or safeguarding moral and ethical standards.

While obviously preliminary and exploratory, these findings suggest that mass media products may be chosen and valued not merely upon features such as "star power", special effects imagery, or even critical acclaim, but rather because they contain story lines and archetypic meanings which resonate with the consumer's own life experiences and concerns. As such, they may serve as vehicles of self-observation and self-projection: we come to see how we are now and how we could be in the future.

Motion pictures and television shows preferred by consumers also enabled them to grapple with certain cleavages between what they desired their lives to be and what life actually offered. One's inner imaginings do not always correspond to external reality, one's self-set goals may be impinged upon by obligations to others, and one's plans for the future may be interrupted by unforeseen events. By 'living through' conflicts between the Ideal and the Real, the Self and Others, and Choice and Chance as presented in their favorite films and programs, consumers may be able to better come to grips with these issues in their own lives.

It would be very interesting to see if similar patterns are found in consumers' experiences of sporting events (e.g., football, baseball, stock car racing), recreational activities (e.g., hiking, hunting, fishing) and even their perceptions of and preferences for political

candidates. These types of consumption also unfold over time, have elements of struggle, morality, chance, corruption, and the opportunity for heroic behaviors recognized by these informants.

The present study also suggests that we should perhaps heed the suggestions of Zaltman (2000) that most of consumers' cognitions occur on an unconscious level; if Jung and more recently Lakoff and Johnson (1999) are correct, then consumers' preferences for deeply metaphorical, image-laden products such as motion pictures and television shows may be formed not out of attribute-based, conscious thought, but rather at a much more fundamental cognitive/emotional level. Among the interviews I conducted, it was usually during the retelling of their favorite film or television program that consumers began to interject bits and pieces of their own autobiographical experience. Perhaps, as Bruner (1987) suggests, we tell our own story through the stories we have learned and which deeply moved us. Finally, the interplay between consumers' preferred cinematic and televised narratives and their own autobiographical constructions may also assist in Sherry's (2000) project of "re-enchanting" their world. Fictional heroes, utopias and struggles can, and do, assist us in leading our own lives in a more meaningful fashion.

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Advertising and the Public Sphere

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Critics have blamed advertising for manipulating people, creating and instilling false needs and values, promoting materialism, perpetuating stereotypes, and presenting a personal world of consumption sheltered from social problems (e.g., Haug 1986; Kellner 1990; Lasch 1979; Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1986; Pollay 1986; Schiller 1989; Schudson 1984; Williamson 1978). Many have condemned the advertising institution for its contribution to the development and reinforcement of an undemocratic social order by fostering concentration of enormous economic and cultural power in the hands of a few corporations (e.g., Jhally 1987; Kellner 1989; Schiller 1989). Although there might be some validity in these criticisms, developments during the 1990s, among which is the relocation of advertising to an explicitly political forum by companies, such as Benetton, Diesel, FCUK and Body shop, call for rethinking the role of advertising as something more than a hegemonic tool of the capitalist ideology.

In the past decade, a handful of companies began producing advertisements that carried explicit political and social messages. Pioneering this move was the Italian clothing company, Benetton, whose advertising featured, instead of product pictures, images of AIDS, wars, environmental disasters, racism, and convicts on death row. Benetton ads quickly entered into the public discourse, provoking heated discussions. So far, the discussions concerning Benetton style advertising have included two opposite views. Some blame the company for emotional manipulation and commercialization of serious social issues; others praise it for highlighting the very same issues. Whether one likes or hates them, however, they generate academic and popular debate. In this paper, I am interested in neither finding the true intent of Benetton nor judging its ethics. Rather, I explore the implications of this advertising style for the advertising institution and democracy. Given these concerns, the objectives of this study are twofold. First, I explore what makes these advertisements so controversial. Second, I discuss the possibility of a performative function for advertising, which in addition to selling products can incite public debate and dialogue on social and political issues, and foster positive notions of identity and citizenship.

Unlike ads that promote social causes, Benetton advertisements challenge representational and ideological norms of advertising. Traditionally, advertisements, given their commercial goal of creating a positive image for the brand, show the pleasurable and happy experiences associated with the product. In many campaigns of Benetton, however, the iconic images of human suffering and distress replace the images of fantasy and happiness. This conscious attempt to replace the fantasy of consumption by social and political commentary not only violates the structural norms of advertising but also problematizes the cultural codes that distinguish genres in terms of whether they represent the "reality" or the "unreality." Furthermore, these advertisements upset the assumption that advertising is confined to the personal world of consumption by invading that realm through the incorporation of political and social issues into their message.

While we can easily condemn these advertisements by arguing that they commercialize important issues to create publicity and sell products, we can also explore whether such advertisements point to a transformation of the advertising discourse in late-capitalist societies. Years of research have taught us that advertising performs several functions in addition to selling goods. It provides symbolic information about products and consumption activity; it

helps people in constructing their identities through providing lifestyle and role models; it operates as a significant site of popular cultural production. If advertising is capable of performing all of these roles, perceived as positive or negative depending on the ideological position of the researcher, then can it undertake a new role that reconciles capitalist aims and critical consciousness, however perplexing it may appear? Critical studies often consider advertising and citizenship as a contradiction, arguing that advertisements obscure the real issues of society and erode the critical abilities of people to think and act as politically and socially conscious individuals. However, by addressing highly charged social and political issues and shocking middle class values and sensibilities, these ads transform advertising to a language of conflict instead of consensus, incite debate and dialogue about social and political issues, and create almost a Habermasian public sphere (Falk 1997; Meijer 1998).

When we think of advertising as a potential site of the public sphere, three questions emerge. First, to what extent advertisements induce public debate and dialogue around issues of general interest? Second, who are the agents participating in this communicative action? Third, what effects does such public communication generate? The fame of Benetton ads stems from their ability to enter into the public discourse. These advertisements stimulate two different types of discussion. On the one hand, they incite debates around the social and political issues they portray, i.e., Benetton's "Looking At Death in the Face" campaign and the discussions it generated about death penalty. On the other hand, they incite debates about the appropriateness of advertising as a medium to voice political and social commentary. Multiple "publics" including consumers, retailers, company officials, intellectuals, interest groups, civil organizations, advertising professionals and industry organizations participate into the debate. These publics possess different levels of economic, political, and legal power, represent different interests, and voice conflicting views. The form of their participation ranges from outcry, complaint, criticism, approval and appreciation. The effects of these advertisements appear to be at two different levels: opinion formation and action taking. By inciting debate around the social/political issues they communicate and the functions of advertising institution, these advertisements motivate various publics to form opinion, be it in favor or in opposition. Second, they induce different publics to take action toward the company. The actions can range from writing complaint/appraisal letters, boycotting (by both consumers and retailers) or purchasing of the company products, and ultimately banning the advertisements.

Conceptualizing advertising as a potential site of the public sphere opens up several future research avenues. First, how do different groups of consumers read and respond to these advertisements? Second, how does social dialogue stimulated by advertisements shape identities of individuals and foster virtual communities of consumers, or "neo-tribes" (Maffesoli 1996; also see Cova 1997). Third, while these advertisements create awareness about the brands they promote, to what extent does increased brand awareness influence recall, attitudes, purchase intentions, and brand image?

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Early Soviet Advertising: “We Have to Extract All the Stinking Bourgeois Elements”

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper is the first part of the ongoing project to reconstruct the history of the Soviet advertising throughout the history of the regime. It utilizes interpretive, historical and textual methods of analysis. The October Revolution of 1917 ruptured the gradual development of history in all life venues including advertising. The paper argues that in Russia, advertising underwent the stages of development similar to that of America, including industrialization and modernization.

The disastrous economic conditions that Russia found itself after the Revolution mostly replaced the market-based trade with non-monetary forms of exchange, therefore the economic purpose of advertising ceased to exist. In place of advertising of consumer goods the Bolsheviks resorted to agitation and propaganda for the new social system. However, in doing so, it employed the principles similar to that of advertising—dissemination and selling of ideas. The topics of agitation were anti-war, pro-Revolution and pro-industrialization.

The focal point of this paper is the Soviet advertising effort in the 1920s. Because of the fusion of different political and economic entities, this period was unusual for the Soviet history in many ways. To remedy the ailing economy, the government reinstated private trade and traders. As a result the period from 1921-1930, a period of “state capitalism,” was an amalgam of ideologies, norms, and cultures. The necessity to compete with private businesses forced the state to use every ideological weapon available. The special importance was placed on the state advertising that was designed to show the advantage of the Soviet-produced goods.

Famous Soviet artists were interested in creating specifically Soviet advertising that had a Revolutionary look. Visually, it consisted of angular geometric constructions that were supposed to represent people and material subjects in non-mimetic ways. They aggressively used typography, playing with different sizes, directions, and the letter appearances. Instead of creating a pleasing image and luring consumers into buying the merchandize, it emanated the Revolutionary energy and up-beat attitude.

In the 1922, *Zhurnalists* [Journalists], the new organ of print workers of Russia, began its publication. It was a lively print medium that was engaged in discussions on the nature and content of the Soviet press and the directions of its development, experimenting with various writing styles and visual aids. From its first issue, *Zhurnalists* showed interest in Soviet advertising, attempting to develop ideological and theoretical base for it. The Communist ideology propagated the clean break with the bourgeois past. Predictably, those interested in the advancement of advertising, had rejected the past advertising achievements of the czarist Russia, however accomplished they had been. Instead, they suggested turning to the American and German advertising experience—the countries that had been considered as the most efficient and technologically developed.

However, *Zhurnalists*'s authors defined Soviet advertising goals as contrasting to that of capitalist advertising goals. Instead of immersing in competition, Soviet advertising in their opinion should educate the consumers and inform them of the new habits and new ways of life and at the same time beautify life and to be the branch of art. Concentrating on differences in ideology with capitalism, the proponents neglected to see the similarities in the advertising functions of both systems: essentially the Soviet advertising goals were the existing roles of bourgeois advertising. Adver-

tising publications in *Zhurnalists* also suggested the association of propaganda and advertising which on some occasions they called “trade propaganda.” They recommended drawing upon the experience of Revolutionary posters.

The only road of the advancement of Soviet advertising for *Zhurnalists* was education of advertising cadres and mastering the methods of scientific psychology. It reported the results of original scientific experiment, reprinted articles from German advertising publications on psycho-techniques, and published essays on contemporary American advertising. *Zhurnalists* showed interest to psychology as a powerful tool for the effective propaganda. The authors of *Zhurnalists* interested in the topic, organized the Association of Advertising Workers was to develop methodology for the rational and effective advertising.

The young Soviet Russia had ambitious goals of building socialism in one country. This meant a giant leap of mostly rural communities into urban industrialized nation and transformation of Russia into modern society. Modernity for the country reflected categories similar to that of the Western world: progress, rationality, effectiveness, and science. Advertising was perceived as a tool that will help the young country to approach the gleaming ideal.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Consumers' Beliefs about Luck and Consequent Reactions to Lucky and Unlucky Situations

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Luck describes the influence of chance on the situations we face in life. A lucky or unlucky event, then, arises randomly. Nevertheless, individuals' implicit beliefs about luck often violate this basic assumption. For example, gamblers may kiss a pair of dice before throwing them and athletes sometimes engage in strange rituals, such as wearing the same "game-shirt," in an apparent attempt to improve their luck. Such anecdotal evidence suggests that at least some people believe, contrary to rationality, that luck represents something other than chance influences. Research verifies that people often are irrational in their interpretations of luck-related situations, and presents different conceptualizations of their views of luck's influence (see Wagenaar, 1988).

Though the topic of luck has received scant attention from consumer behaviour researchers (McDaniel, 2002), it plays an important role in a number of purchasing situations. For example, shoppers might feel lucky or unlucky if they unexpectedly find or miss a favoured brand or a sale opportunity. And, more importantly, both retailers and manufacturers use luck-based promotional games and events to boost sales, and many marketers depend on such tactics as crucial parts of their promotional strategies (Feinman, Blashek, and McCabe, 1986).

Our session seeks to clarify the nature of consumers' interpretations of lucky and unlucky events. Three papers present somewhat different conceptualizations of luck and explore the implications of these ideas for consumers' behaviours. In particular, we will examine the consumer behaviour implications of conceptualizing luck as a negatively biased force (Ofir and Simonson), a consistent personal attribute that exerts a positive influence on expectations (Darke and Freedman), and a consideration for consumers' self-expression (Briley and Price).

The Invisible Narrator: Attributes and Consumer Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

Advertising research affirms the importance of the advertising narrator, whose function is to persuade consumers by attracting attention, enhancing credibility, triggering consumer-speaker identification, and conveying product meanings. However, virtually all of this research treats the effects of visible narrators rather than invisible ones. Our research reinforces the concept of consumers as co-creators of messages by showing how consumers draw from personal experiences and persuasion knowledge to imagine characteristics of invisible narrators. The paper presents a study of invisible narrators based on a theoretical framework drawn from narratological literary theory and advertising persuasion theory to fit the advertising context. Propositions about the narrator's attributes, valence, and relationship to the consumer are tested in a study that elicits quantitative and qualitative data. Findings indicate that consumers construct a narrator's attributes even when s/he is unseen and develop attitudes to the ad in terms of attitudes to the narrator.

The purpose of this paper is to extend prior research on advertising narrators by focusing on the message speaker, also called by a variety of names such as "source" (O'Keefe 1990), "persona" (Elliott 1982), "voice" (Lanser 1981), and "teller" (Abrams 1990), defined as the perceived human or humanized speaker who tells a story to consumers (Riessman 1993). The assumption that a narrator is present in advertising messages derives from literary and communication theory, in which words are assumed to emanate from *someone speaking* (Martin 1986). The narration-persuasion association that reappears in advertising dates back to the earliest extant rhetorical and literary criticism: Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (Lawson-Tancred 1991) and *Poetics* (Fergusson 1961). Aristotle's concept of speakers as orators in the *Rhetoric* and as *dramatis personae* in the *Poetics* locates narrators as the source of persuasion whose aim is to stimulate audience effects.

Recent advertising research reaffirms the link, with narrators conceptualized of as within-ad speakers (Stern 1991, 1993, 1994) whose function is persuasion to consume (Friestad and Wright 1994; Baumgartner, Sujan, and Bettman 1992; Sujan, Bettman, and Baumgartner 1993). Narrators have been found to persuade (O'Keefe 1990) by attracting attention (McGuire 1985), enhancing credibility (Joseph 1982), triggering consumer-speaker identification (Deighton, Romer, and McQueen 1989); and conveying product meanings (McCracken 1989). Specific persuasive tactics have been examined in the literature on celebrity source effects (McCracken 1989), drama/lecture (Deighton and Hoch 1993; Deighton, Romer, and McQueen 1989; Wells 1989), marketing agency (Friestad and Wright 1994), and self-persuasion (Baumgartner, Sujan, and Bettman 1992). In addition, research on consumer-constructed meanings also references persuasive narrators, relying on interview data to discover what consumers think about ad meanings (Mick and Buhl 1991; Mick and Politi 1989).

However, virtually all of this research treats the effects of *visible* narrators rather than *invisible* ones. Our study aims at extending the research stream by turning attention to the formal and substantive attributes of invisible narrators and their effects on consumers. We derive the theoretical formulation of invisible narrators from narratology theory—the study of literary narratives (stories, novels, tales)—which has been adapted to the study of

advertisements (Stern 1991, 1993, 1994). In narratology, the presence of a speaker is taken as a common denominator of all written stories, in that they rely on "some use of personification whereby character is created out of ... the words on the page" (Miller 1990, p. 75). The assumption is that when readers are faced with speakerless words, they will infer that the message comes from a speaker, "just as the words that you and I speak *are ourselves*" when we speak to others (Martin 1986, p. 51). Invisible as well as visible advertising narrators have an especially important function in advertisements, where they are needed to break through audience disinterest (Kover 1995), and function as "hooks" to pull consumers into ads (Escalas, Moore, and Edell 2003). We continue the application of the narrator-persuader nexus to invisible narrators, and begin with an overview of grammatical and evaluative attributes that delineate different narrator types.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW: NARRATOLOGY AND PERSUASION

Narratology: Grammatical Person

Narratological theory grounds the grammatical dimension of narrative identity as either the self or another, for it examines the question applicable to both advertising and literary stories: "Who is doing the talking?" (Sutherland and Sylvester 2000). Narratology is a sub-field of literary criticism that gained prominence in the late 1960s, following Tvetzan Todorov's (1968) definition and categorization of it as a research area (Cohn 1978). Todorov's theory relies on that of the 1920s Russian Formalists, whose works were relatively unknown because they were not translated into English until the late 1950s (see Ehrlich 1981; Thompson 1971). Nonetheless, the Formalists were the first modern critics to reject Victorian subjectivism and return to an objective approach to texts based on Aristotelian principles of scientific classification. This ideological perspective appealed to the New Critics' analytical bent, and since the 1950s, narratological criticism has burgeoned. Its premise of a story that tells itself (narratorless) as logically impossible (Genette 1983 [1988]; Todorov 1968) is axiomatic in narratology, which focuses on axes of formal and substantive differentiation to classify narrator types into parsimonious categories.

The most fundamental formal distinction is the grammatical dichotomization of narrators expressed in the English pronominal difference between the self-referent pronoun "I" or the other-referent "he," "she," "it," or "they" (Kenney 1988). Grammatical differentiation is a constant across English classification systems, no matter what terminology is used (Genette 1983 [1988]), in which the first-person narrator reports personal experiences (Stern 1991), and the third-person one reports information about others.

Persuasion Theory: First/Third Person and Positive/Negative Valence

Person: In consumer research, Friestad and Wright's Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM 1994) posits third-person narration ("s/he," "his/her"), which leads consumers to generate "beliefs about the traits, competencies, and goals of the persuasion agent" (Friestad and Wright 1994, p. 3). This relates to Wright's earlier comments on consumers' "communicator subschema," used to determine the narrator's identity by stimulating consumers to ask, "why is this person describing his/her characteristics?" and "why

was s/he chosen to deliver this message to me?" (1986, p. 1). However in the self-referencing literature, autobiographical first-person narration is posited, with consumers' autobiographical experiences defined as "memory for information related to the self; more precisely... memory for events from one's own life" (Baumgartner, Sujan, and Bettman 1992, p. 54). Thus, the first attribute is person, with a narrator conceived of either as a third-person agent or a first-person self (Baumgartner, Sujan, and Bettman 1992).

Valence. The formal dimension cannot be separated from the substantive one, for the key to story interpretation is "understanding how form and content are fused" (Martin 1986, p. 16). The second dimension is substantive, discriminating between a narrator viewed as either a positive or a negative influence on consumers. Its theoretical basis is as old as the Western cultural dualism between good (hero, helper) and evil (villain, harmer) inherited from Judeo-Christian and classical traditions, now viewed as a universal rule of narration. It is restated in Vladimir Propp's Formalist narratological work, *Morphology of the Folktale*, which appeared in 1928 but was again not translated into English until 1958. Propp's identification of essential story elements became influential in the study of folklore and then of narratives in general. The theoretical core is a classification scheme that divides all narrators into 7 role categories, with 2 fundamental ones common to all stories: the hero (seeker/victim) versus the villain (destroyer/denier). Virtually all later narratologists follow Propp's notion of a universal distinction between heroic and villainous narrators, with Jung, for example, claiming that first-person narrators are viewed positively as sincere because they reveal self-truths and do not try to put something over on readers (1968). In contrast, third-person narrators may be viewed negatively as insincere because they pretend to convey unbiased information, but instead express authorial opinions.

Both persuasion and self-referencing research follow prior theory in positing consumer perceptions of narrators as positive or negative influences on consumption. The consumer's assignment of valence to a third-person versus a first-person narrator depends on different heuristics in that a third-person agent is evaluated in terms of an appropriateness heuristic applied to others, but a first-person one is evaluated in terms of feelings about oneself. In the persuasion literature, appropriateness is the criterion whereby consumers differentiate between an appropriate third-person marketing agent who delivers a "moral or normatively acceptable" message (Friestad and Wright 1994, p. 10), and an inappropriate one who delivers a manipulative spiel. That is, marketing agents are viewed positively when they are perceived as helping consumers to make wise decisions, and viewed negatively when they are perceived as hurting consumers by persuading them to make bad decisions and go against their best interests (Wernick 1991).

In self-referencing research, on the other hand, the first-person self narrator is endowed with valence by means of an affective heuristic, whereby an emotional response is triggered by retrieval of an "intact" memory (Sujan, Bettman, and Baumgartner 1993). Similar to persuasion theory, the "affect associated with personal memories can be either positive or negative," with individuals exposed to the same stimulus able to recollect either positive or negative life episodes (Baumgartner, Sujan, and Bettman 1992, p. 58). However, most self-referencing research focuses on elicitation of positive emotions, "because there is a bias toward remembering positive episodes from one's life and because ads often encourage the retrieval of pleasant rather than unpleasant memories" (Sujan, Bettman, and Baumgartner 1993, p. 424). Nonetheless, in following this research, we claim that both positive and negative self-narrators exist, with autobiographical memories of a product or

usage situation likely to stimulate ad evaluations by means of empathetic or sympathetic (Boller and Olson 1991; Deighton, Romer, and McQueen 1989; Wells 1989) emotional responses to the storyteller and the story. Empathy is elicited when consumers vicariously experience an advertising story, and use their more affective state (feeling into the emotion itself) "as a heuristic for judgments" (Baumgartner, Sujan, and Bettman 1992, p. 78). Sympathy is elicited when consumers understand the advertising narrator's emotions and use their more cognitive state (recognizing the depicted emotion) as a parallel heuristic. To sum up so far, literary theory and consumer research converge on two common attributes, and the following section presents the propositions about the perception of narrators, their attributes, persuasive intent, and influence on attitudes to ads.

PROPOSITIONS

Perception of Narrators and Diverse Perceptions

The central theoretical assumption in multidisciplinary research is that even when no narrator is visible, perceivers are likely to imagine one to make sense out of a story (Howard and Allen 1989). They are said to construct a speaker based on the "strands of action, information, and personal traits [that] are woven together to form the thread of character" (Martin 1986, p.116), who tells a comprehensible story. However, the assumption that consumers do construct an advertising narrator has not yet been studied, even though it is crucial to determine whether or not it occurs. To do so, the first proposition posits construction of a narrator in the invisibility situation. The second proposition posits the construction of different narrators, for individuals are free to assign meaning to ads.

P1: Consumers will tell stories about an invisible narrator.

P2: Consumers will tell different stories about the narrator.

Perception of Persuasive Intent

Even though consumer stories about narrators are predicted to differ, persuasion theory assumes that consumers understand advertisements as texts designed to persuade and invoke persuasion schemas (Greenwald and Banaji 1989) to facilitate processing. Pre-existing persuasion knowledge is developed in the course of exposure to ads, and people develop criteria over time for evaluating the validity of message claims by observing its surface features. Heuristic processing enables quick assessments of a persuasion attempt's effectiveness (Friestad and Wright 1994), and the proposition states that consumers recognize ads as persuasive.

P3: Consumers will perceive narrators' persuasive goals.

Evaluation of Narrators as Positive/Negative

Proposition 4 follows from P2 (individual stories will differ) and P3 (persuasive goals will be perceived), stating that individual assessments of persuasive tactics will also differ. It treats the evaluation of narrators as positive when they speak in the consumer's best interests, or negative when they speak only for the marketer. In this regard, positive evaluations of narrators are likely to lead to the formation of favorable attitudes to an advertisement and acquiescence in the persuasion attempt, whereas negative evaluations are likely to lead to skeptical Aad and resistance to its persuasive message. Some consumers may accept the "just like me" self-narrator as true to life, whereas others may discount such narrators as sponsorship creations who fake similarity to manipulate them (Friestad and Wright 1994). Further, some consumers may perceive other-narrators as appropriate sponsorship agents, whereas others

may perceive them as “mind-screw-ers” involved in “marketplace gamesplaying” (Wright 1986, p. 1). Notwithstanding the perception of a narrator as self or other, consumers who perceive themselves to be objects of manipulative influence tactics are assumed to react negatively by invoking a “schemer’s schema” to evaluate the message (Wright 1986). We propose that consumer judgments of ad narrators will be positive/negative.

P4: Consumers will evaluate narrators as positive or negative.

Consumer-narrator Relationships and Attitudes to Ads

Theoretical support for the concept of a narrator-narratee is found in narratology (Lanser 1981; Wallace 1986), in which a reader’s perception of a narrator’s relationship to him/her is considered the basic element of a narrative transaction. The concept is reaffirmed in advertising/consumer behavior research, where the process of making sense out of a story is based on consumer decisions about the nature of the relationship (Stern 1991). Perceptions of the consumer-marketer relationship are said to influence evaluations of both the other-narrator’s behavior (Friestad and Wright 1994) and that of the self-narrator. When consumers project themselves into a story or recognize like-me narrators, they may participate emotionally in the scenario, but when they remain outside observers of a fake self or a manipulative agent, they may disengage emotionally and become more judgmental. Persuasion by self-identification is said to motivate copywriters’ creation of a like-me narrator (Kover 1995), and persuasion by other-identification to evoke vicarious participation in another’s experience (Boller and Olson 1991). Burke described successful consumer-narrator identification in itself as persuasive, stating that “you can persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language... *identifying* your ways with his” ([1950] 1969, p.55). We propose that consumers perceive the self/other relationship.

P5: Consumers will view the invisible narrator as self/other, in relation to themselves.

Even though Aad studies do not focus on the narrator in general, we follow the suggestion that the target as interpreter is an aspect of consumer interpretations of persuasion attempts (Folkes 1988). We draw from evidence found in the self-persuasion literature to develop the connection between the narrator’s message and ad attitudes. Previous research supports the finding that messages become more persuasive when they activate consumer memories that trigger emotional responses that transfer to ad evaluations (Boller and Olson 1991; Deighton, Romer and McQueen 1989; Wells 1989). Furthermore, the persuasiveness of the narrator’s message is enhanced when it successfully activates self-relevant opinions, values and goals and creates identifications with the audience (Burke [1950] 1969; Mulvey and Medina 2003).

P6: Consumers who recognize a greater (lesser) degree of self-relevance in the narrator’s message will produce more (less) favorable ad evaluations.

THE STUDY

Data Collection

The propositions were tested in a study of consumer responses to ads lacking a visible narrator via a computerized questionnaire that used open-ended questions to elicit verbal and/or visual descriptions and traditional scale measures. The rationale for combin-

ing open-ended with scales is that the verbal/visual data captures consumers’ thoughts about ads (Walker and Dubitsky 1994), and the measures capture attitudinal effects.

Sample

Seventy-five undergraduate business students in an introductory marketing class at a large northeastern public university participated in the one-hour study for 2.5% of their grade. The sample consisted of 42 female and 33 male participants (75), with an average age of 21 years. The justification for use of a student sample is that students were the target of the stimulus ads, which appeared in the college newspaper as part of a Visa campaign to attract student users. The respondents were pre-screened to determine credit card ownership, and 93% of the respondents said that they owned one, with 87% stating that they owned two or more.

Ad Stimulus

Figure 1 shows two print ads from the Visa campaign ran in student newspapers, with two different headlines:

8 wds Ad 1: “Because all-nighters aren’t always spent in the library.”

6 wds Ad 2: “Because today is mystery meat day.”

Aside from the words in a handwritten font, there is no concrete evidence of a persona, which forces readers to invent someone responsible for the words. The first word, “because,” poses an implicit question—because why?—that calls for an answer (Stern 1991). The text is a teaser, for it is up to the readers to provide closure by inferring the problem and the solution (“use Visa”), based on the product benefit in the tagline, “It’s everywhere you want to be.” The headline catch phrases “all-nighter” and “mystery meat”, familiar to college students, are not spoken by anyone visible, forcing readers to construct a speaker, his/her motivation, actions, and outcomes.

Method

Respondents were randomly assigned a questionnaire about one ad and were seated at computers. They were given a copy of the ad in a page of the daily newspaper to heighten task realism by allowing them to view the ad in context, and were asked to respond to a 4-part questionnaire. Part 1 followed established procedures in requesting responses to four specific questions rather than a single general one (“what do you think about this ad?”) to minimize irrelevant responses (Wansink, Ray and Batra 1994). The questions were adapted from those used in prior research: “What story does the ad tell?” (Mick and Politi 1989; Deighton, Romer and McQueen 1989; Stern 1994); “How does the ad make you feel?” (King, Pehrson and Reid 1993; Walker and Dubitsky 1994); “How does the ad relate to your life?” (Mick 1992; Mick and Buhl 1992); and “Please tell us why you like or dislike the ad (Mitchell and Olson 1981; Walker and Dubitsky 1991).

Part 2 used a projective prompt to determine perceptions of the ad narrator, instructing respondents to “draw and/or describe the speaker. Please be as detailed as possible.”

Part 3 presented respondents with three scales that measured Aad, personal relevance, and normative evaluation of the ad situation. Attitude toward the ad (McKenzie, Lutz, and Belch 1986; Mitchell and Olson 1981) was measured by four seven-point semantic differential items (unpleasant/pleasant, bad/good, unlikable/likable, and boring/interesting). Cronbach’s alpha for the four items was 0.93. The four measures were averaged to form an overall measure of attitude toward the ad.

FIGURE 1
Ads Used in Study

Because
all-nighters
aren't always
spent in
the library.



It's everywhere
you want to be.

Because today is
mystery meat day.



It's everywhere
you want to be.

Respondents' evaluations of the situation depicted in the ad were measured by Rook and Fisher's (1995) 5-point scale of 10 bipolar adjective pairs (good-bad, rational-crazy, productive-wasteful, appealing-unappealing, smart-stupid, acceptable-unacceptable, generous-selfish, sober-silly, mature-childish, and right-wrong). A factor analysis confirmed scale unidimensionality, and the 10 items were averaged to form an overall evaluation ($\alpha=.88$).

The authors developed a self-report measure using a 6-item, 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree) to assess personal/other-relevance of the message. Personal relevance was measured in statements about the ad's consistency with the respondent's experiences: "This ad is a slice of my life"; "I can relate to using a credit card in this situation"; and "It was as if I wrote the ad." Other-relevance was measured by statements about the ad's representation of other people's behavior: "I have seen others come up with excuses like this before"; "Many students behave in this manner"; and "I know people who rationalize their behavior in this manner." Factor analysis using a varimax rotation yielded a two-factor structure validating the measure, with self-relevance as one factor and other-relevance as the second. The scales were averaged to provide overall measures of self-relevance ($\alpha=.85$) and other-relevance ($\alpha=.71$). Thus, the scale items were able to distinguish between two kinds of message relevance.

Part 4 requested demographic information (age, sex) and credit card usage patterns (card ownership, payment history and responsibility, purchase patterns).

Data Analysis

Verbal responses were coded independently by the authors, who classified responses on the attribute axes of self/other and positive/negative. Coding the narrator's grammatical person in a marketing context was straightforward, for the pronouns determine whether narrators are conceived of as peer/self or persuasion agent/other. Coding the narrator's positive/negative valence produced some discrepant readings, requiring discussion to negotiate meanings.

FINDINGS

Proposition 1 stating that consumers will tell stories about an invisible narrator was confirmed, with all 75 respondents producing descriptions of the narrator, and 21 producing drawings (see Figure

2 for sample illustrations). The descriptions uniformly refer to someone "who is speaking," indicating that respondents create a speaker and a story about the antecedents and consequences of credit use by making inferences that enable them to "follow" the ad's meaning. Proposition 2 stating that consumers will tell different stories about the narrator was also confirmed, and Table 1 shows the divergent responses.

Proposition 3, stating that consumers will perceive the narrators' persuasive goals, is confirmed, supporting the claim that readers are aware of ads as attempts to persuade. The majority of students recognized that they were targets, making comments such as "Visa is targeting students," and "the ad is aimed at college students." Even those who focused on the ad's persuasive message imagined a variety of types of corporate persons, mostly negative, conceived of as a manipulative corporate spokesperson who pretends to relate to students but really just wants their money. Some critiqued the ad itself by questioning the sponsor's motives for using the headline language, offering suggestions about improving the layout, and criticizing the ad's openness to multiple interpretations. Thus, support for the first three propositions indicates that different narrators are perceived and recognized as persuasive.

Propositions 4 and 5 are also confirmed, supporting the attribute dimensions out of which narrators are constructed. Proposition 4, stating that consumers will evaluate narrators as positive or negative, was confirmed. Table 2 shows the frequency of positive/negative and self/other narrators. In both ads, 17% (12) of the respondents described a positive free spirited student as the narrator. However, the mystery meat ad elicited significantly more negative descriptions (Chi-square=16.5, $p<.001$), especially those referring to a cafeteria worker who serves disgusting food. Proposition 5, stating that consumers will describe the invisible narrator in relation to themselves as self/other, was also confirmed. Respondents provided diverse descriptions of narrators in relation to themselves (participants or targets) or others who influence their actions. Confirmation of the attribute propositions thus underlies the classification of four distinct types of narrators.

Self/Positive: As self/positive figures, respondents provide autobiographical interpretations that are self-referential (Sujan, Bettman, and Baumgartner 1992). No matter whether the self is actual or ideal, s/he is always a cash-starved student who uses the Visa card to turn a situation from threat to opportunity. One

FIGURE 2
Sample Illustrations of the Ad Narrator



common pattern is that of a student who uses credit to play now and pay later. Interestingly, "all-nighter" rarely refers to studying for an exam. Rather, one variant is about a night out partying with friends, and another is about a sexual conquest by a male "big spender" who impresses a date and is thanked in a "personal way." Other positive self narrators rely on the card to overcome threatening situations, which differ for men and women. When the narrator is male, he is faced with an emergency such as a late-night car breakdown, but overcomes the threat by charging rescue and repair bills. When the narrator is female, her lack of cash prevents her from going to a restaurant with friends, but the card comes to the rescue.

Self/Negative: Most of these responses are only mildly negative, for even though the narrators are described in negative terms, their story ends happily. For example, the male narrator in the "mystery meat" ad is often someone who hates cafeteria food because of dietary restrictions or health concerns, but who manages to avoid it by using the card to pay for a restaurant meal. In contrast, the female narrator is often someone who wants to become part of a social group going out to eat, but feels guilty or lacking in self-esteem because she has to pretend that she is more affluent than she really is by relying on the card in the absence of ready cash. The point of these stories is that the narrator's attempt to impress her

TABLE 1
Characterizations of the Ad Narrator

Character Type	Description	Goals (Traits)	Frequency	
			Ad A "Library"	Ad B "Meat"
Self – Positive				
<i>The Free Spirit</i>	Pleasure-seeking, spur-of-the-moment type acts with confidence and follows his/her impulses without regret.	To experience life in the moment (Spontaneous, individualistic)	6	6
<i>The Party Animal</i>	Extroverted hedonist slurs the words, beer in hand. Not the scholarly-type, he maintains a low GPA.	To have fun (Hedonistic, rebellious)	8	0
<i>The Leader</i>	Socialite inspires peers to escape mundane routine by partaking in activities in the pursuit of happiness.	To create memorable experiences (Charismatic, kind)	6	1
Other – Positive				
<i>The Wise Advisor</i>	An empathetic voice of experience (possibly a graduate) entices students to loosen up and enjoy their college years.	To educate and guide (Wise, confident)	6	0
<i>The Caring Provider</i>	Concerned parent-type offers credit card to ensure students' safety should an unforeseen emergency arise.	To protect (Caring, compassionate)	2	2
<i>The Restaurateur</i>	Friendly food services professionals (restaurant host, waiters, or butcher) offer a solution to students' food dilemma.	To serve (Proactive, supportive)	0	3
<i>The Temptress</i>	Warm, seductive, sultry voice exhorts students to alter their credit card spending behavior.	To tempt (Flirtatious, affectionate)	2	0
Self – Negative				
<i>The Spendthrift</i>	Free spender willing to incur charges to get what they want; may rely on others to defer his/her frivolous expenses.	To indulge desires (Impulsive, irresponsible)	1	6
<i>The Victim</i>	Dejected student complains about inedible cafeteria food. Strapped for cash, he feels obliged to eat the prepaid meal.	To avoid problems (Moody, in denial)	0	5
<i>The Finicky Foodie</i>	Picky woman refuses to eat the disgusting cafeteria food. She cites health concerns to justify going elsewhere to eat.	To never compromise (Demanding, stubborn)	0	4
<i>The Dork</i>	Dorky loser tries to impress others and appear cool. Clearly, this annoying person does not get out much.	To belong, friendship (Desperate, pathetic)	2	0
Other – Negative				
<i>The Clueless Exec</i>	Out-of-touch middle-aged man dressed in a business suit tries (in vain) to relate to college students.	To connect, to convince (Alienated, yearning)	3	1
<i>The Lunch Lady</i>	An unpleasant, hairnet-donning cafeteria worker slops disgusting food onto a plate, inspiring students to leave.	To spread misery (Unpleasant, unhappy)	0	4
<i>The Profiteer</i>	Wealthy executive collects interest payments from poor college students.	To capitalize (Greedy, manipulative)	2	1
<i>The Gourmand</i>	Overweight middle-aged man salivates in anticipation of mystery-meat meal.	To indulge appetite (Gluttonous, short-sighted)	0	2
<i>The Shopper</i>	Middle-aged woman uses credit card to finance a spending binge at the local mall.	To indulge desires (Impulsive, careless)	0	2

TABLE 2
Classification of Narrators by Attributes and Ad Version

Plot Pattern	Ad "A" – Library		Ad "B" – Mystery	
	Narrator Type		Narrator Type	
	<i>Other</i>	<i>Self</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Self</i>
<i>Positive / Guide</i>	10	20	5	7
<i>Negative / Warning</i>	5	3	20	15

peers fails either because they mock her pretensions or she herself feels fraudulent. Despite this, she regains peer respect and affirms her real identity if she learns from her mistake and avoids overuse of credit in the future.

Other/Positive: Respondents also described other/positive narrators whose goal was to influence him/her to use credit to achieve a positive outcome. These narrators are described in terms of the respondents' personal and social values functioning as a just-like-me friend, a protective family member, or a student who triumphs over adversity. For example, the narrator may be a college graduate who represents the voice of experience, advising students to enjoy the best years of their lives or a parent who protects a child by making sure that s/he has a credit card in case of an emergency. In some cases, even if narrators are perceived as the sponsor-generated solution to a problem, they are still considered positive marketing agents.

Other/Negative: However, negative marketing agents comprise the majority of negative other-narrators, likely to be cast as sponsorial manipulators such as debt collectors who lacks empathy with students or obviously fake "students." Thus, the classification of narrators into 4 types based on 2 attributes validated the predicted four-box typology.

Proposition 6 was supported. Consumers who perceived higher levels of self relevance in the narrator's message produced more favorable ad evaluations ($R^2=.42$, $F(1,72)=51.34$, $p<.001$). The addition of normative evaluations, card ownership, and sex to the model only yielded a small increase in $R^2=.024$, for message self-relevance was the strongest predictor of affective responses to the ads. A post-hoc test found that character valence (positive / negative) did not affect ad attitudes directly ($F(1,72)=.85$, NS). However, consumers with positive (negative) views of the narrator perceived slightly greater (lower) levels of self relevance in the narrator's message ($R^2=.11$, $F(1,72)=8.7$, $p<.01$).

Despite the fact that the normative evaluations of both ads were virtually identical, attitudes to each differed. The all-nighter ad stimulated significantly more positive attitudes (4.8 vs. 4.0, $F(1,72)=6.09$, $p<.05$) than did the mystery meat ad. In the all-nighter ad, the narrator was most often conceived of as positive, and respondents found it easier to relate to this ad (3.2 vs. 2.5, $F(1,74)=7.33$, $p<.01$) than to the mystery meat ad, no matter whether the narrator was self or other (see Table 1). One possible explanation is that all-nighters are more often part of student life than compulsory food plans.

Limitations. The limitations of this study concern generalizability and verisimilitude. Insofar as the stimulus was a print ad, responses cannot be generalized to electronic ads in which cues such as voice, sound effects, and motion on TV may influence interpretations. Further, even though the ad was appropriate for the student sample, forced viewing may have influenced responses by focusing attention to the research situation and not the advertising (Kover 1995). Participation in a study for class credit may require

more involvement from respondents than everyday advertising encounters would.

Notwithstanding the limitations, the study indicates that even when ad narrators are invisible, consumers draw from personal experiences and/or cultural conventions to attach meaning to the visible words by constructing formal and substantive attributes for the narrator. Multiple interpretations of the same words reveal that even though different narrators are constructed, each reflects the consumer's tacit understanding of ads as persuasive message. In addition, consumers perceive the narrators in terms of two major attributes, with positive self/others influencing positive attitudes to the ad. Taken as a whole, the findings reinforce the concept of consumers as co-creators of messages powerful enough to engage them in a positive relationship with a narrator.

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Narrative Word-of-Mouth Communication: Exploring Memory and Attitude Effects of Consumer Storytelling

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores “word-of-mouth” (WOM) communication from the perspective that this type of communication is typically structured as a narrative or story. The first study provides empirical evidence that consumer WOM communications are often structured as a narrative. The second study extends findings from psychology research to the context of a WOM story by examining two factors of story memory that may affect brand attitudes: 1) biased memory for story details and 2) recall of story gist, defined as a summary abstraction of the story. We propose that a narrative perspective will enhance the field’s understanding of WOM communication.

INTRODUCTION

For a company to be successful, it is essential that it understand consumers’ perceptions of its products, services, and/or brands. Marketing and advertising frame these perceptions, along with word-of-mouth (WOM) communication between consumers when they complain about products or recommend products to friends. Although there is not much that marketers can do to influence WOM communication, it is important for marketers to understand this phenomenon in order to develop a fuller understanding of the processes at work in consumers. Word-of-mouth communication is one of the strongest sources of information for consumers (Kotler 1988). This interaction between consumers can work against the brand or product when a consumer shares a negative experience or can work in favor of the product when a positive experience with the brand or product is communicated.

Our research extends concepts from psychology to WOM communication in order to better understand its effects on consumers. Our goal is to enhance knowledge of the structural properties of WOM communication as well as examine consumers’ memory and attitude responses to WOM communication, based on its structural properties. This research project consists of two studies. In the first study, we explore the structure of WOM communication and provide a preliminary indication that WOM communication is typically presented as a narrative, that is, in the form of a story. This knowledge about the structure of WOM communication leads to the second study, which analyzes what people remember about a WOM story and how WOM story memory affects consumer attitudes (more specifically, assessments of blame in a problematic service encounter).

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Much marketing research has been conducted on word-of-mouth communication and recommendations. For example, consumer research has examined how WOM travels through social networks (Brown and Reingen 1987), when consumers are apt to complain (Richins 1983), and how consumer attributions mediate the effects of WOM on brand evaluations (Laczniak, DeCarlo, Ramaswami (2001). Herr, Kardes, and Kim (1991) have shown that WOM communications are highly accessible because they are vivid, but their effect on persuasion is diminished in the face of more diagnostic information. Recent research has explored the factors that influence whether consumers rely more on strong-tie and weak-tie sources of recommendations (Duhan et al. 1997) and has compared WOM referral behavior in the United States to that of

Japan (and found that referral behavior is different across cultures; Money, Gilly, and Graham 1998). Smith and Vogt (1995) have examined how WOM communication interacts with information presented via advertising. Thus, marketing researchers have explored the antecedents of WOM communication, how consumers use WOM communications to make decisions, and who talks to whom and/or looks to for advice.

However, more research is needed on how consumers cognitively process WOM communications (Laczniak et al. 2001). For instance, the field has not examined the structure of WOM communications, which has theoretical implications for how WOM information is processed, how it is recalled, how it affects consumer attitudes, and how it interacts with other incoming information, such as that presented in the form of advertisements. Based on previous research on consumer narratives (e.g., Escalas 1998, Escalas and Bettman 2000), we believe that WOM communications are structured as a story. That is, when consumers relate their experiences with products, services, and brands to others, they typically tell their listener a story, with themselves as the protagonist. This proposition is developed next and empirically examined in Study 1.

Why Should WOM Communication Be in Story-Form?

People make sense of their lives by thinking about themselves and the events around them in story-form (Bruner 1990). Narratives, considered here to be synonymous with stories, organize events into a framework that establishes causal relationships between the story’s elements over time (Hastie 2003). Stories provide us with the reasons for why things happen and why people engage in particular behaviors. For example, one of the authors understands why her father has such a strong work ethic because she’s heard his many stories of how he struggled while he was growing up and was finally able to obtain everything he dreamed of by working hard and persevering. Given our narrative understanding of the world, we also think of ourselves in terms of self-stories. Moments in time are not unrelated, rather there exist goal-directed, coherent sequences linking one’s past, present, and future into a present identity (Gergen and Gergen 1988). Furthermore, when people communicate with one another, they usually do so in the form of stories (Schank and Abelson 1995). People constantly tell each other stories, matching and comparing incoming stories to stories that are already stored in memory in order to understand one another. A major focus of the stories created by consumers is to make sense of who they are and what they consume, both for themselves and in communicating with others.

The Structure of Narratives. What makes a story a story? An important aspect of narrative thought is its structure. This structure consists of two important elements: chronology and causality. While there are many theories about the necessary elements of narrative structure that vary as to the fine points of what constitutes a narrative, they consistently agree on the necessity of a temporal dimension (chronology) and defined relationships between story elements (causality; Escalas 1998). First, narrative thought organizes events in terms of a temporal dimension; things occur over time. Time is configured in narratives as episodes, each with a beginning, middle, and end, whereas time in reality is an undifferentiated, continuous flow (Bruner 1990, Polkinghorne 1991).

Second, narrative thought structures elements into an organized framework that establishes relationships between the story's elements and allows for causal inferencing. Episode schemas represent the standard sequence of events in both the real world and in stories (Pennington and Hastie 1986). To begin, an event, or series of events, initiates a psychological reaction and activates goals in a main character. The goals may be formulated in response to the initial event or may be preexisting goals that are activated by the initial event. The protagonist's psychological state and goals provide reasons for his/her subsequent actions. These actions lead to an outcome or result. Because these narrative elements are organized through time, causal inferences can be made. What happens in time one (for example, the protagonist feels jealous) causes what happens in time two (he kills his rival).

How Narrative Processing Affects Memory and Attitudes

In this paper we focus on the narrative mode of thought as a process. Narratives are constructive. A typical story consists of interrelated episodes describing human action sequences; people are willing to make inferences and even delete (or forget) information in order to make their stories coherent and complete (Baumeister and Newman 1994). Narrative thinking does not lead people to ignore contradictions, but it provides a way for the inevitable inconsistencies that people observe in human behavior to be interpreted and remembered more easily (Baumeister and Newman 1994). Building stories is an ongoing process; people fit characters and episodes together in a narrative form to render the world and their lives meaningful.

Consumer research has recently begun to look at the effects of narrative processing. Adaval and Wyer (1998) have shown that narratives improve the evaluation of vacations, compared to simple lists of features. The authors assert that the advantage of narratives comes from their structural similarity to information naturally acquired in life experiences and from their tendency to induce holistic, not piecemeal, information processing strategies. Padgett and Allen (1997) have proposed that since service encounters are experiential, they are likely to be understood via narrative processing. Therefore, these authors assert that narrative advertising may be the best way to communicate a service brand image.

In terms of memory effects, narratives can be considered an organizing framework that should enhance memory, consistent with a long stream of research in psychology (e.g., Barlett 1932, Tulving and Pearlstone 1966). In the context of television news broadcasts, Lang (1989) has shown that chronological (i.e., narrative) presentation of events in a newscast enhances viewers' memory for the events. Schank and Abelson (1995) assert that over time, narratives are remembered as abstractions or "story skeletons." This has implications for how stories affect judgments and attitudes.

A recent study on the effects of narrative processing on memory and attitudes explores these implications. In their research on storytelling effects on judgments about interpersonal relationships, McGregor and Holmes (1999) assert that storytelling has a double meaning. On the one hand, "it implies recounting experiences in a coherent narrative format with the perspective of an audience in mind," (McGregor and Holmes 1999, p. 403). On the other hand, "it can also connote a certain slippage from the realities of the episodes it supposedly portrays, if not a wholesale bending of the facts to create a 'good story'" (ibid, p. 403). This "slippage" of facts to create a good story has implications for the attitudes consumers will hold as a result of hearing a WOM story.

In their relationship research, McGregor and Holmes (1999) examine two potential explanations for how stories influence judgments about who's to blame in a relationship gone awry: biased

memory for story facts and memory for the story gist, defined as the summary abstraction of the story (or story skeleton). While these two mechanisms work together to influence relationship judgments, it is story gist that has the strongest, long-term effect. Long after memory for story facts has faded, story gist still affects judgments about who's to blame in a problematic relationship. This mediation relationship is shown in Figure 1. In terms of WOM stories, biased memory for story facts and recall of story gist should be important mediators of brand attitudes. Study 2 examines the effects of these two mechanisms in the context of a WOM story about a negative experience with a service provider. The study manipulates the focus of the story as well as the length of time between the initial story writing exercise and the assessment of recall and blame. In this way, we can test for the mediational effects of biased recall of story details and story gist in the short-term condition, and story gist alone in the long-term condition.

Narrative Implications for WOM Communications

The proposed narrative structure of WOM communication has implications for some of the previously described consumer research. For example, Herr et al. (1991) find that the vividness of WOM communications leads to its being accessible. Many aspects of narrative structure have an impact on how vivid a WOM communication will be (e.g., overall story quality, compelling characters, captivating plot, etc.). Laczniak et al. (2001) find that causal attributions mediate the effect of (negative) WOM on brand evaluations. Hastie (2003) has argued that stories are the primary mental mechanism for making causal attributions, because stories structure events in goal-oriented action sequences that result in (or cause) particular outcomes. Smith and Vogt (1995) examine how (negative) WOM information is integrated with information presented in advertising. The narrative structure of WOM communications has implications for this stream of research as well. One hypothesis is that a narrative ad, that is, an ad that tells a story, may counteract negative or positive WOM story effects better than another type of ad, for example, one that provides product information in an analytical fashion.

STUDY 1: NARRATIVE WOM STRUCTURE

This study explores the structure of word-of-mouth communication to test our hypothesis that this form of communication is usually organized as a story or a narrative.

Method

Participants. Sixty-two undergraduate students at a large, public, Southwestern university participated in this study to meet an introductory marketing course requirement.

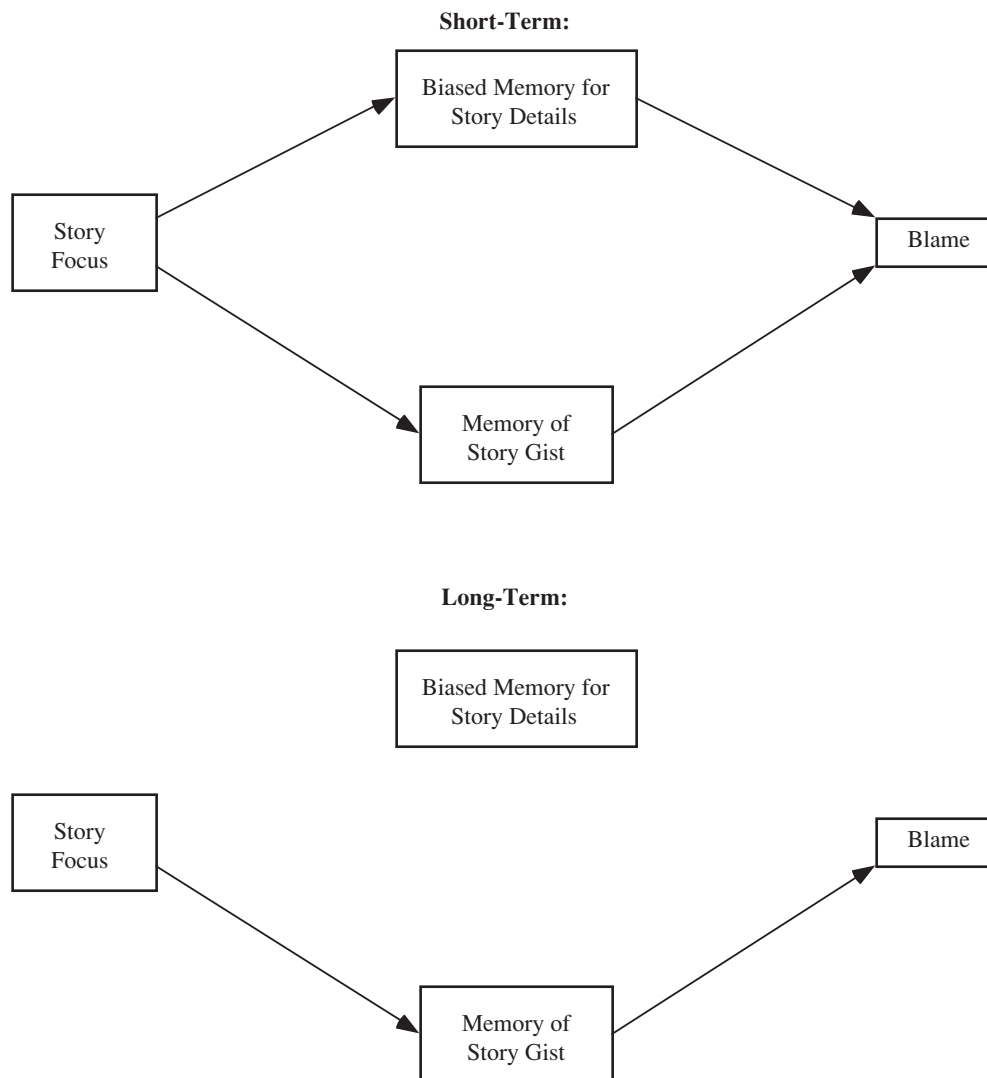
Procedure. First, participants were asked to relate a recent product, service, or brand experience as if they were talking to a friend. The instructions, which emphasized "telling" and "talking" to avoid having participants feel as if they were writing a report, read as follows:

Please tell us about a recent experience you've had with a product or brand. You may prefer to tell us about a recent service encounter you've had, that's fine too. The experience can be either positive or negative, it does not matter. Just take the next few minutes and couple of pages to tell us about the product, brand, or service situation as if you were talking to a friend.

After completing this task, participants were asked to complete a series of questions about both what they had written and the product, service, or brand they had written about. Two coders blind

FIGURE 1

McGregor and Holmes (1999) mediation model of biased recall and story gist on blame assessment



to the hypotheses later coded each participant's product experience (in its entirety) for the degree to which it told a story, using Escalas's (1998) narrative structure scale, described next.

Measuring Story Quality

Beyond the basic structure of narrative, described above, other theories have identified story characteristics that contribute to a narrative's quality, answering the question, "what makes a *good* story?" In one such theory, Bruner (1990) proposes two dimensions to narrative: the landscape of action and the landscape of consciousness. The landscape of action consists of events that are visible to the casual observer: the initiating event, resulting action(s), and outcome(s). The landscape of consciousness allows the reader/viewer to "get inside the head" of the story's character(s). The audience learns what the character is thinking and feeling. According to Bruner, a story with both a landscape of action and consciousness is a better story than one that contains only a landscape of action.

In another theory, Gergen and Gergen (1988) theorize that the dramatic engagement of a narrative depends on the evaluative slope of the story. The events in a story are evaluated over time (as it occurs in the narrative) for the degree to which they improve or worsen the state of the protagonist. Stories that have a steep incline or decline in evaluative slope and those that alternate in sign (e.g., rising, falling, then rising again) evoke the most emotion. The classical tragedy, *Oedipus Rex*, is an example of a narrative with rapidly deteriorating events, from the perspective of the protagonist.

Based on these story quality theories and others, Escalas has developed a six-item narrative structure scale to measure the degree to which an advertisement, or any type of communication, is in the form of a story (1998; Escalas, Burke, and Edell 2004). The WOM communications recounted by the 62 participants were coded by two independent coders blind to the hypotheses, using this six-item scale (see Table 1). Two items appraise the causal relationships explored by narratives (items 1 and 4). One item captures the

TABLE 1
Narrative Structure Coding Scale Items (Escalas 1998)

-
1. To what extent do these thoughts consist of actors engaged in actions to achieve goals?
 2. To what extent do these thoughts let you know what the actors are thinking and feeling?
 3. To what extent do these thoughts provide you with insight about the personal evolution or change in the life of a character?
 4. To what extent do these thoughts explain why things happen, that is, what caused things to happen?
 5. To what extent do these thoughts have a well delineated beginning (initial event), middle (crisis or turning point), and ending (conclusion)?
 6. To what extent do these thoughts focus on specific, particular events rather than on generalizations or abstractions?
-

NOTE: These items are measured on five-point scales, anchored by not at all (1) and very much so (5).

chronology of narrative; that is, whether the ad has a beginning, middle, and end (item 5). Another important element of narratives is character development (item 3). Item 2 measures the extent to which the communication reveals Bruner's "landscape of consciousness." Finally, one item addresses the characteristic focus of narrative thought on particular events rather than generalities or abstractions (item 6).

The six items were averaged for each coder to form one narrative score for each coder for each WOM communication. Each had solid Cronbach alphas (coder 1 $\alpha = .88$, coder 2 $\alpha = .72$). While the two coders' average narrative scores were only moderately correlated ($r = .43$, $p < .001$), they were averaged to form one narrative score per WOM communication (combined $\alpha = .85$). The averaged six-item scale was used as the study's primary independent variable.

Results

Based on the narrative structure coding, the WOM communications averaged 3.43 on the five-point scale, significantly above the midpoint ($t_{61} = 5.95$, $p < .001$). The WOM communications were considered to be well-developed narratives if they scored 3 or more on the combined five-point narrative structure scale (Escalas 1998). By that criterion, 75.8% (47) of the participants' written WOM responses consisted of well-developed stories. Additionally, 48.4% (30) of the responses were equal to or above the more conservative test of greater than or equal to 3.5 on the five-point narrative structure scale. Thus, the preliminary indication is that WOM communications appear to often be in the form of a story. As these numbers indicate, the responses may not be complex novels, but they do have a number of story elements that should have repercussions on how the WOM communications are processed and remembered.

Discussions of Study 1 Results

In sum, it appears that consumer WOM communications typically have many narrative elements and can thus be described as being in the form of a story. However, the written form of this study is a limitation: most WOM communication is transmitted orally, not in writing. The very process of writing down their thoughts may have influenced what participants wrote. While we believe the writing process is more likely to work against creation of a story, in favor of writing a cohesive argument for or against a product, service, or brand, we cannot rule out this alternative

explanation. Future research should include tape recording and coding oral WOM communications elicited in a more naturalistic setting, with more attention given to subsequent thought-coder training to enhance inter-coder reliability.

STUDY 2: MEMORY AND ATTITUDE EFFECTS OF NARRATIVE WOM COMMUNICATIONS

When sharing a certain experience with a product or brand, people normally communicate in the form of a story (Study 1). Memory for story facts and the story gist (the summary abstraction of the story) have been shown to affect the attitude of the listener towards the target of the story (McGregor and Holmes 1999). Study 2 examines the influence of two effects (biased memory for story details and story gist) on WOM story recall and the effect of recall on brand attitudes (more specifically, assessment of blame). In this study, we closely follow the procedure and analyses used by McGregor and Holmes (1999), in the context of a WOM communication about a problematic trip on a popular airline.

Method

Participants. Seventy-six undergraduate students at a large, public, Southwestern university participated in this study to meet an introductory marketing course requirement.

Procedure. This longitudinal study consists of two parts. In Part I, participants were asked to read a vignette about a character named Greg who flew on Delta Airlines on his way back to the university to begin the semester. This simulated hearing a WOM communication from a friend, with the characteristics of being an indirect WOM communication, in a weak-ties situation, presenting second-hand information (Smith and Vogt 1995). The vignette told the story of a trip with a number of problems as well as solutions, with an equal number of positive and negative attributes for both parties (e.g., Greg arrive late to the airport, the Delta connecting flight was delayed). Next, participants listed all the story details that favored Greg on one page, followed by a second page where they wrote the story details that favored Delta Airlines, in order to provide us with an indication of their initial perspective of the story. Then, the students were instructed to write a biased story in favor or against one of the parties, based on what they remembered about the story (half were asked to support Greg, the other half Delta Airlines, regardless of their own personal feelings after reading the vignette). Next, participants were asked whom they blame more for

TABLE 2
Blame Scale Items (McGregor and Holmes 1999)

-
1. Who showed the most reasonable behavior?
 2. Who acted most unfairly?
 3. Who made the most effort?
 4. Who was most responsible for the difficulties?
 5. Who was most at fault?
 6. Who had the most acceptable behavior?
 7. Who was most to blame?
 8. Who had the worse attitude?
-

NOTE: These items are measured on seven-point scales, anchored by Delta Airlines (1) and Greg (7).

the problems that arose in the story, using a eight-item scale developed by McGregor and Holmes (1999; see Table 2). By examining whom participants blamed after writing their biased stories in response to the WOM communication, we are able to determine the influence of the two manners in which story recall affects attitudes (biased memory and story gist) on subsequent blame assessments.

Part II was completed at two different time frames. Approximately one-half of the participants completed Part II eight to nine weeks later, while the other half completed it 17 to 18 weeks later. In Part II, participants are asked to reassess blame, again using the eight-item, seven-point McGregor and Holmes scale (1999), and complete a series of recall and recognition items, described in the next section.

Variables. The eight-item McGregor and Holmes (1999) blame scale has solid reliability in our data ($\alpha_{\text{time one}}=.88$, $\alpha_{\text{time two}}=.91$). In our study, higher numbers on the blame scale correspond to greater blame being placed on Delta Airlines. Additionally, three recall and recognition items were collected in Part II: biased recall, false recognition, and story gist. We asked that participants 1) record all the details they were able to recall from the original story, 2) judge whether ten items were true or false based on the story (all were false), and 3) indicate whether there was anything they remembered particularly well about the story. The recall items were coded for the number of items that favored Greg or Delta Airlines and an index was created by using the residual of the pro-Greg details regressed on the pro-Delta details as a measure of biased recall.¹ Next, five of the false recognition items favored Greg, while five favored Delta Airlines. We created our false recognition variable by taking the residual of false recognition of pro-Greg items regressed on pro-Delta items. Finally, an independent coder blind to the hypotheses assessed the evaluative implications of what participants reported they remembered particularly well about the story. Thus, the value of the story gist variable ranges

from -1 to +1 (-1 if the story gist favored Delta Airlines, +1 if the story gist favored Greg, and 0 if it didn't favor either party).

Covariates. While care was given in creating the vignette to make sure that both Greg and Delta Airlines each contributed equally to the problematic flight scenario, a variable reflecting the initial perspective of each participant was created as a covariate to remove any variance in the data that emerged as a result of a perception that one of the two parties was more at fault than the other. We created an initial perspective index by using the residual of the pro-Greg story details regressed on the pro-Delta story details written by subjects in Part I when they first read the vignette. This covariate is included in all the ANCOVA models conducted for this study.

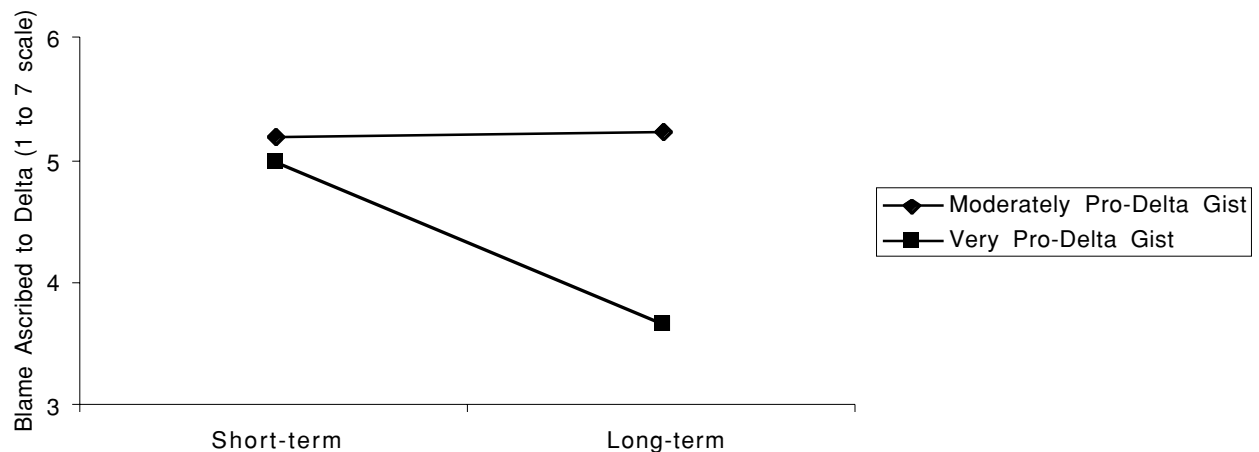
Results

The basic hypothesis in this study is that biased memory for story details and the story gist remembered will mediate the effect of storytelling on blame assessment in the short-term, while only story gist will mediate in the long-term (see Figure 1). In order to test this hypothesis, we used the Baron and Kenny approach (1986), where to demonstrate mediation, four relationships must hold. First, the focus of the story written by each participant must have a significant effect on whether that participant primarily blamed Greg or Delta airlines for the problems that occurred. Unfortunately, we only find directional support for an effect of story focus on blame (pro-Greg=5.21, pro-Delta=4.94, $F(1, 71)=2.35$, $p<.07$, one-tailed). However, even when the first step in testing for mediation is not statistically significant, the possibility still exists for an indirect effect of story focus on blame assessment through biased memory of story details and story gist. To test for an indirect effect, we look the second and third relationships described by Baron and Kenny (1986). The second relationship is that story focus must affect the two biased memory variables (biased recall and false recognition) and story gist. While we find a significant effect of story focus on story gist ($F(1, 44)=2.81$, $p<.05$, one-tailed),² we do

¹We conducted square root transformations on all the variables contributing to the aggregate indices to normalize their potentially skewed distributions before the indices were calculated.

²Only 44 of the 76 participants completed the story gist questionnaire item, 77% in the short-term condition and 47% in the long-term condition.

FIGURE 2
Interaction of Time Frame and Story Gist on blame assessment



not find an effect of story focus on either biased recall ($F(1, 75)=1.0$, $n.s.$) or false recognition ($F(1, 74)<1.0$, $n.s.$). Thus, we do not replicate McGregor and Holmes's (1999) biased memory findings in this consumer WOM context.

We find that story focus has an indirect effect through story gist on blame assessment. When added to the model of story-focus on blame, story gist remains significant ($F(1, 44)=2.98$, $p<.05$, one-tailed), while story focus does not ($F(1, 44)<1.0$, $n.s.$). Furthermore, the indirect effect of story focus on story gist on blame is significant ($Z=2.12$, $p<.05$; Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger 1998). We also find a significant interaction effect of time frame (short-term versus long-term) by story gist on blame ($F(1, 44)=4.60$, $p<.05$). Figure 2 presents these results graphically, using a median split of story gist to dichotomize the data (story gist median=-1.0). Consistent with the idea that while biased memory effects fade over the long-term, story gist does not, we find that story gist has a greater impact on the extent to which participants blamed Delta in the long-term condition than in the short-term condition. Simple main effects reveal that the difference within long-term is significant ($F(1, 44)=2.75$, $p<.05$, one-tailed) and the effect within very pro-Delta story gists is marginally significant ($F(1, 44)=2.20$, $p<.07$, one-tailed). The other two contrasts are not significant ($F_s<1.36$, $p>.25$).

Discussion of Study 2 Results

While the story gist results found in Study 2 are encouraging, the results for biased memory are disappointing. Our goal was to demonstrate that while WOM story gist affects blame assessments in both the short-term and the long-term (supported), biased recall of WOM story elements only has an effect in the short-term (not supported). We believe our lack of results stems from two problems in our study. First, lack of subjects limits our power to detect mediation. For example, in the long-term condition, only 27 individuals answered the story gist question, 14 in the Greg-focused story and 13 in the Delta-focused story conditions. Second, the length of time between sessions is too long for the attention span of our student subjects. McGregor and Holmes (1999) used three conditions: two weeks, six weeks, and 40 weeks. We used eight weeks and 18 weeks. There are other indications that the subjects were not engaged in the task over the experimental time frame. For example, the average number of pro-Greg and pro-Delta thoughts

recalled at time 2 are only one apiece (averaging over both the short-term and long-term conditions).

Future research could modify the approach used in this paper. First, it would be advisable to shorten the short-term condition to two weeks and the long-term condition to 10 weeks. Our student subjects should be able to recall something of the WOM story over two weeks, but will also most likely forget the story details (except the story gist) in 10 weeks time. In addition to blame assessments, it would also be beneficial to include the marketing variable brand attitude, since this is the standard measure of whether or not consumers like a brand in our field.

CONCLUSION

This stream of research is a first step towards increased understanding of WOM communication. The results of Study 1 reveal that WOM communications are often in the form of a story. With this information, we can apply theoretical insights on how narratives are processed, recalled, and used in attitude formation towards understanding what happens in consumers' minds when they are exposed to other consumers' WOM communications. For example, our results for Study 2 indicate that even when there is little to no biased memory for story events, story gist mediates the effect of the focus of a WOM story on subsequent attitudes about the story's characters and/or brands. Thus, it will be important to examine how story gist memories are formed, stored in memory, and instantiated in subsequent consumer contexts.

Directions for Future Research

In addition to the future research described throughout the paper, future studies should expand on our understanding of the interactive effects of WOM stories and advertising. As we noted above, marketers cannot directly affect WOM communications. However, they do control the content and structure of their advertising campaigns. Therefore, our future research goal is to apply what we have learned about WOM memory mechanisms to how consumers, who have heard WOM stories, interact with advertising for a given company or brand. This research will build on the work of Smith and Vogt (1995), who have examined order effects in information learned sequentially from WOM and advertising. They find that when the ad is processed first, it inoculates consumers

against future negative WOM communication, and when the ad is processed second, it can help attitudes and retentions recover from the negative WOM information presented earlier. In this paper, we have presented some preliminary evidence that WOM communication is narratively structured and that over the long term, only story gist is recalled and therefore is able to influence attitudes. It would be interesting for future research to investigate how story gist interacts with ad information presented in the form of a story (i.e., narrative ads), compared to ads that present information in a more analytical fashion (e.g., drama versus lecture ads, Wells 1988).

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Living in Another World: The Role of Narrative Imagination in the Production of Fantasy Enclaves

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

While there are multiple manifestations of consumers' imagination in the marketing literature, very little is known about its nature and the role that it plays in consumption experiences. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the concept of imagination, especially as it relates to the construction of alternative consumption realities or what Belk and Costa (1998) call "fantastic consumption enclaves." In this regard, we address two pertinent issues that are of interest to consumer researchers. First, we explore *the nature of consumer imagination* in consumption experiences and second, we provide insight into *the role that imagination plays* as a source of pleasure and as an indication of consumers' playful, voluntary participation in experiential consumption.

Two major existing streams of literature are identified. First, mental imagery research (Atwood 1989; Childers and Houston 1983, 1984; Gutman 1988; Mitchell 1986) treats consumer imagination as an information-processing mode that, compared to non-imagery processing, can be a strong mnemonic device and enhance incidental learning (MacInnis and Price 1987). In general, the more vivid the image of a stimulus, the stronger the effect on memorability and cognitive structure will be (Kisielius and Sternthal 1984). Since imagery processing assists elaboration and product visualizations, it can render product use more likely, consumption events more probable, and consequently, it is argued that it can have a positive effect on decision strategies, purchasing intentions, and satisfaction (MacInnis and Price 1987, 1990). This research tradition conceives mental images as "static pictures" that more or less vividly reflect the external reality. Also, it is restricted in the images of certain objects, sounds or smells, de-contextualized from their larger environment. The more encompassing mental activity of elaboration that is subsumed under the same literature does not evade these limitations, since new images are treated as pieces of information that are added to the existing imagery structure in order to provide a better "static picture" of the stimulus object and enable consumers to make more informed decisions. While the information processing view of consumption has greatly enriched marketing thought, it is mostly focused on consumer decision making and thus, it falls short in addressing experiential modes of consumption like tourism, leisure, and various playful activities.

On the other hand, the phenomenological tradition treats imagination as an entity separate from the external sensation, constituting an experience by itself (Giorgi 1987). In this respect, it addresses some of the problems encountered by the mental imagery perspective. This perspective is in accordance with the experiential view of consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982), where imagination is seen as a form of human experience. However, there is no work that examines how imagination as an experience plays out in consumption contexts. Both of the above perspectives seem incomplete in addressing the phenomenon of imagination during consumption experiences and its role in constructing fantasy worlds.

Ethnographic research was conducted at Gettysburg, one of the most significant Civil War sites in the United States. Not only does Gettysburg attract the largest number of visitors from all other war sites in the United States, but it also provides an ideal context to study consumers' interaction with a world that is 140 years in the past, during the most fierce civil war battle ever waged in the

western hemisphere, and with a major role to play in the future conception and structure of the nation. Data collection methods included 75 personal interviews with 121 visitors, business owners, managers, and licensed guides, participant and non-participant observation, and photo-elicitation.

The findings show that consumers' imagination is an essential element of the visitors' experience and it operates in assisting consumers' to visualize scenes of the past, to vicariously participate in the battle, and to experience what it feels like to live in the past. In addition, this imagination extends beyond a visual picture" into all the forms of sensory experiences: acoustic, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory. Consumers are able to hear noises, smell odors, and feel the mid-summer heat penetrating their skin. Under this property, their imaginings include the environmental conditions and they offer a holistic view of life in the past, rather than an isolated "image." In this sense, consumers' imaginings imitate life. Imagination includes *actors* (people lived in the past) who *perform acts* (fight, charge, being killed) at specific *scenes* (authentic locations). Actors, acts, and scenes are intertwined in consumers' imagination in a dynamic whole. Thus, their imagination is not restricted to a static, visual picture. Rather, it is an encompassing, moving scene that develops like a narrative: from a beginning, through a middle, to an end (Ewick and Silbey 1995). In addition, this dynamic nature of imagination is life-like: it imparts sensory elements in the form of "believed-in imaginings" (Sarbin 1998). It is this dynamic character of consumer imagination that differentiates it from previously discussed notions of a mental image and makes it dramatic. It is this dramatic perspective of what visitors visualize that renders their imagination a *narrative imagination*.

Our data illustrate that one impact that narrative imagination has on the consumption experience is in providing consumers a better understanding and a deeper insight into the life of the past. Furthermore, narrative imagination assists consumers to connect with the past. We define *connection with the past* as a deeper cognitive and emotional understanding of life in the past according to which someone vicariously experiences what it must have been like to live in the past. What is very characteristic about this experiential state is that during certain moments *the past becomes alive*. Data collected at Gettysburg show that during these moments "people come up closer to the actual event" and that the whole experience "brings you closer to what has happened."

Marketers can perceive this connection as a major payoff for the consumption of products related with the past. It is this connection that brings consumers close to events that happened hundreds or thousands of years ago and endows them with value. In a more generalized sense, consumer imagination operates as a time machine (Anderson 1982, 1984) that transfers consumers into alternative worlds and makes them "really, really real" (Brown, Hirschman, and Maclaran 2000).

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Self-Brand Connections: An Exploratory Study into Construct Validity and Gender Effects

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The fundamental premise of the Self-Brand Connection construct is that when brand associations are used to construct one's self or to communicate one's self to others, a strong connection is formed between the brand and the consumer's self identity (Escalas 2004). The purpose of this study was threefold: first, we test the reliability and the validity of the Self-Brand Connection Scale (Escalas 1996; Escalas 2004), designed to measure such types of self-brand associations. The second objective was to examine the extent to which self-brand connections are positively related to brand evaluations as well as the interesting concept of attitude strength (Krosnick and Schuman 1988; Krosnick et al. 1993). Lastly, we test the impact of the Self-Brand Connections scale within the context of a *gendered* brand. For this purpose we selected the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), a sub-brand of the parent brand, the NBA. This brand has been strategically crafted to appeal to female consumers and thus provided an ideal opportunity to examine whether females will show stronger self-brand connections for this type of brand than their male counterparts.

Hypotheses

- H1: *Self-brand connections are positively related to brand evaluations.*
- H2: *Females will exhibit higher self-brand connections relative to their male counterparts.*
- H3: *Self-brand connections are positively related to attitude strength.*
- H4: *Higher self-brand connections will enhance brand evaluations and attitude strength for both males and females, but the incremental contribution of increased connections will be greater for females when evaluating a female-gendered brand (i.e., there will be a significant interaction between self-brand connections and gender on brand evaluations and attitude strength).*

Method and Results

Two separate (survey) studies (N=150 and N=260) measured brand evaluations (i.e., brand attitudes and brand beliefs), Self-Brand Connection, and attitude strength.

First, the results (using Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Lisrel 8.53) showed that a single factor structure representing the Self-brand Connections scale emerged in both studies and factor item loadings were impressively high. Nevertheless, relatively low AVEs (average variance extracted) seemed to indicate that the self-brand connections construct may be in need of further refinement. Attempts to establish discriminant validity suggest that the self-brand concept was differentiated from brand attitudes only in the second study.

Second, the results confirm that self-brand connections are positively related to *brand attitudes* and *brand beliefs*, a finding that is consistent with the work of Escalas (2004) who provided a conceptual basis for the distinction between self-brand connections and brand attitudes. She points out that whereas consumers may agree that a certain brand possesses a high level of quality, that brand itself may not be linked to one's self concept and may therefore receive a low self-brand connection rating. Our study has

therefore provided some degree of support for the discriminant validity of the self-brand connections construct.

Third, self-brand connections showed a very strong relationship to *attitude strength* (Krosnick and Schuman 1988; Krosnick et al. 1993). According to Krosnick and Petty (1994), strong attitudes tend to be: (a) persistent over time, (b) resistant to change, (c) likely to have strong impact on information processing, and (d) more likely to have a strong impact on behavior. If this relationship between self-brand-connections and attitude strength is valid, one should predict a range of important hypotheses in future research. For example, consumers with strong self-brand connections should be characterized as having more persistent attitudes to their favorite brands and these attitudes may be more resistant to change. Consequently, these consumers may therefore be more loyal to the brand that is closely linked to their self-concept.

Fourth, *Gender Differences in Response to the 'Gendered Brand*. Females exhibited higher self-brand connections relative to their male counterparts. Higher self-brand connections did enhance brand evaluations and attitude strength for both males and females, but the incremental contribution of increased connections was greater for females when evaluating the female-gendered brand. In other words, there was a significant interaction between self-brand connections and gender on brand evaluations and attitude strength. These findings showing a linkage between the female *gendered* brand and the female respondents of this study are consistent with the notion of a 'match' or 'gender fit' reported in previous research on the 'matching' requirements for celebrity effectiveness (e.g., Kahle and Homer 1985; Kamins 1990).

Future Directions

Our results regarding the relationship between self-brand connections and gender represent an important contribution to the emerging literature on self-brand connections (Escalas 2004, Escalas and Bettman 2003) and other areas of brand attachment (Fournier 1998). The most obvious extension would be a study whereby *product gender* is manipulated to determine if both males and females form self-brand connections to gendered brands, which in turn enhance brand evaluations and attitude strength. If the 'gender match' we found for females is robust, males should exhibit stronger self-brand connections to a male 'gendered' brand, which in turn, impact brand evaluations. More basically, future research may investigate whether for certain types of brands, self-brand connections may be stronger for one gender versus the other. As mentioned above, research on self-brand connections might also focus on attitude strength and its relationship to brand loyalty.

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Nonverbal Cues-based First Impressions: What Can Static Images of Salespeople Tell Us About Their Success at Selling?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

On average, people rely on nonverbal cues than on verbal cues in interpersonal exchanges (Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall 1996). The impact of nonverbal cues appears particularly potent in the context of first impressions (Ambady and Rosenthal 1993; Riggio and Friedman 1986). Given the widely accepted belief that first impressions created by a salesperson lay the foundation for all subsequent interactions with a customer (e.g., Jacobs et al. 2001; Macintosh et al. 1992), it is important to assess the generality of this phenomenon in the context of customer-salesperson interactions, that is, whether and to what extent, nonverbal cues influence customers' first impressions of salespeople. We address three questions pertaining to nonverbal influences on judgments of salespeople: (1) are nonverbal cues-based impressions formed only after lengthy and meaningful interactions with salespeople or can they be formed on the basis of brief or even fleeting interactions (e.g., through exposure to photographs of the salespeople)?, (2) is the impact of nonverbal cues on first impressions independent of the physical attractiveness of the salesperson?, and, finally, (3) do salespeople who create good (vs. bad) first impressions (on the basis of their nonverbal behavior) turn out to be more successful at selling?

Based on our review of recent relevant research, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H1:* Nonverbal cues embedded in static images of targets offer sufficient basis for making evaluative judgments about the targets.
- H2:* The influence of nonverbal cues embedded in static images on target judgments will be independent of physical attractiveness of the target.
- H3:* Nonverbal cues-based judgments will be significantly correlated with real-world measures of target performance
- H4:* The influence of nonverbal cues on judgments takes place outside the awareness of the individual making them.
- H5:* The valence of initial nonverbal cues-based judgments of salespeople will color judgments of the salespeople's subsequent behavior.

In this paper, we conduct two experiments to examine these issues. In the first experiment subjects were asked to judge the personality and likelihood of success of salespeople based only on static images of the salesperson. These judgments were then correlated with assets under management (an objective measure of actual sales success). Ratings of target attractiveness were also obtained. Results from this experiment indicate that: (1) exposure to even a static image of a salesperson is sufficient to evoke judgments, (2) these judgments are independent of the physical attractiveness of the salesperson, and (3) judgments based on nonverbal cues are accurate in the sense that they are significantly correlated with the real-life success of the salesperson (r for global personality variable = .35, $p < .01$; r for overall salesperson variable = .31, $p < .01$).

In the second experiment, subjects were first asked to judge the personality of the highest and lowest rated salespeople from experi-

ment 1. In the second stage, both groups of participants participated in a distracter task (unrelated to this experiment) intended to eliminate short-term memory for the exact target judgments but not to eliminate the valence of the initial impression. In the third stage, participants read a paragraph—adapted from Srull and Wyer (1979) and designed to be ambiguous with respect to the hostility of the target—that detailed the targets' purported interaction with an acquaintance. It is important to note that both groups of participants read the same paragraph. After reading the paragraph, participants judged the target's hostility. Consistent with our prediction (hypothesis 5), the target who elicited more favorable nonverbal cues-based judgments was judged as less hostile than the target who elicited less favorable nonverbal cues-based judgments (M 's = 5.97 and 2.58, $t(68) = 5.08$, $p < .05$).

These results suggest that people interpret a target's behavior in a manner consistent with initial impressions formed on the basis of the target's nonverbal cues. Our findings are thus consistent with recent findings (e.g., Ambady and Rosenthal 1993) and also contribute to the literature on nonverbal influences in the following significant ways.

The finding that target judgments can be made on the basis of nonverbal cues embedded in just physical appearance cues (hypothesis 1), in conjunction with the finding that first impressions color subsequent judgments of the target (hypothesis 5), raises the possibility that judgments made on the basis of dynamic nonverbal cues—documented in earlier research (e.g., Ambady and Rosenthal 1993; Dabbs et al. 2001; Gangestad et al. 1992)—may have been driven primarily by nonverbal cues embedded in the physical appearance (vs. kinesic) channel. That is, our results suggest that the very first judgments of targets are made on the basis of the target's physical appearance and that all subsequent impressions of targets are colored by this initial impression.

A second theoretical contribution of our research stems from establishing the independence of the influence of nonverbal cues from that of physical attractiveness of the target. Results from both experiment 1 of this research indicate that whatever advantages the better looking targets may derive from their looks, these effects are independent of the influence of the nonverbal cues embedded in their physical appearance, as evidenced by the finding that the relationship between personality judgments and real-life success at selling was not mitigated by the addition of physical attractiveness of the target as a covariate.

Our final theoretical contribution is the proposal of a nonconscious halo effect mechanism as an explanation for the accuracy of nonverbal cues-based judgments in this research. In our view (see hypothesis 5) the initial impressions of targets bias subsequent target-judgments, thereby producing a spurious correlation between the two.

Consistent with our hypothesis (hypothesis 4), results from experiment 1 indicate that the influence of nonverbal cues on judgments takes place outside the awareness of the individual making the judgments. Participants were asked to make, on the basis of nonverbal cues, two types of judgments about targets: personality and likelihood of sales success. Since the latter judgment is a higher-order judgment, we should expect to see differences in the predictive validity of these judgments if the process by

which nonverbal cues are used to make judgments is deliberate. Our results indicate, however, that both judgments were equally accurate in predicting the actual success at selling. More direct evidence in support of our hypothesis was obtained in experiment 2, results from which showed that initial impressions formed on the basis of nonverbal cues biased interpretation of the target's purported subsequent behavior.

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A Social Perception View of Business Relationships in the Service Sector

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Current theories of business relationships—for example the buyer-seller relationship model (Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987)—characterize these relationships in terms of characteristics such as trust, commitment, mutuality, flexibility, information exchange etc. Differences in these characteristics within a dyad, for example two parties being unequally committed to the relationship, are then thought of as providing the basis for opportunism, power differences, and the incentive to employ safeguarding mechanisms. It is implicitly assumed that even though parties do not necessarily display the same levels of relational characteristics, they know the true level of relational characteristics of the counterpart. In other words, the parties involved are accurate in their perception of the other party's level of commitment, trust, information exchange, etc. But is this assumption justified? Social psychology has produced powerful demonstrations of how inaccurate people are in their perceptions, leading to poor forecasting of the behavior of others.

In this paper we investigate the effects of perceptual (in)accuracy in dyadic business relationships. Drawing from social perception theory, we propose that business partners a) do not necessarily accurately perceive their counterpart, and that parties b) personify their counterpart. Personification means they form the counterpart's image as if it were a person, not an organization. In other words, the other party (organization) is described in terms of personality traits such as "reasonable," "trustworthy," "forgiving," "consistent," or "flexible." The level of perceptual accuracy then influences how favorable the counterpart's image will be, and how much goal congruence will be experienced with the counterpart. Perceptual accuracy influences the counterpart's image and goal congruence through two psychological mechanisms: surprises (positive and negative), and self-fulfilling prophecies (positive and negative).

We will start with the easy case, that is party A is accurate in the perception of party B. In other words, party A correctly perceives party B as—for example—highly committed. This will lead A to form a positive image of B and to experience a high degree of goal congruence with B. Alternatively, party A may perceive party B correctly as little committed. This will certainly have negative consequences, leading A to form a less favorable (negative) image of B and to experience less goal congruence. What about when A is inaccurate in its perception of B?

Again, there are two ways that A can perceive B's commitment level inaccurately. First, A thinks B is highly committed when B is not: A is *overly optimistic*. In this case, A will on the one hand often be negatively surprised by B because B does not live up to A's expectations. On the other hand, the self-fulfilling prophecy mechanism causes A to behave in ways that induce expectation confirming behavior on B's part, that is high commitment behavior. What will be the effect on the image A forms about B? In general, negative information is weighted heavier than positive information, and hence the negative surprises are likely to outweigh the positive consequences from the self-fulfilling prophecy mechanism. Hence, when A is *overly optimistic*, A is likely to form a negative image of B and to experience little goal congruence with B.

Alternatively, A thinks B is not committed when B is highly committed: A is *overly pessimistic*. In this case, A will on the one hand often be positively surprised by B because B often exceeds A's

expectations. On the other hand, the self-fulfilling prophecy mechanism causes A to behave in ways that induce expectation confirming behavior on B's part, that is low commitment behavior. What will be the effect on the image A forms about B? Again, since negative information is weighted heavier than positive information, the negative consequences of the self-fulfilling prophecy mechanism are likely to outweigh the positive surprises. Hence, in the case A is *overly pessimistic*, A is likely to form a negative image of B and to experience little goal congruence with B.

Concluding, regardless in which direction A is inaccurate in its perceptions of B, this inaccuracy has negative effects on the image A forms about B and the goal congruence A experiences with B. In contrast, an accurate perception of the counterpart improves the image and experienced goal congruence, unless one party perceives the other party correctly as low in commitment, investment in the relationship etc. Perceptual accuracy of course regards all aspects of a relationship, not only commitment, but also trust, mutuality, etc.

In turn, the image a party holds about the counterpart, and the goal congruence experienced with the counterpart, act like a frame for subsequent behavior. That is, if one holds a positive image of the counterpart and experiences a high degree of goal congruence, little conflict will arise and the relationship will prove economically rewarding. If in contrast, one holds a negative image of the counterpart and little goal congruence is experienced, conflict is preprogrammed and the relationship is not profitable.

We test this social perception view of business relationships in the insurance sector, using dyadic data from 242 pairs of independent insurance agents and their underwriters. A non-recursive system of equations is estimated using seemingly unrelated regression estimation. The results indicate that inaccurate perception of the counterpart can indeed damage the relationship by decreasing the sense of goal congruence experienced and by creating a negative persona of the counterpart. These factors in turn increase conflict and lower the profits of either side of the dyad. Thus, insurers and agents alike benefit from realistic assessments of each other's relational behaviors and intentions: perceptual accuracy is rewarded in the marketplace.

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Effect of Cultural Distance on Customer Service Satisfaction: A Theoretical Framework and Research Agenda

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The topic of customer service satisfaction (CSS) has received extensive attention in the marketing literature, motivated by the fact that when customers perceive a high level of satisfaction they become repeat customers, and that also helps a firm attract new customers through word-of-mouth. Even small increases in CSS can have a significant positive impact on a company's profits because satisfied customers tend to increase their amount and frequency of spending, while the marketing costs of retaining these customers are much lower than acquiring new ones (Dawkins and Reichheld 1990; Fornell and Wernerfelt 1987; Payne and Rickard 1993; Reichheld and Sasser 1990; Rose 1990). Several researchers have thus focused on identifying the key drivers of CSS (e.g. service performance and service expectations models of Oliver, 1997 and Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1993) and potential moderators to this process (cf. Smith, Bolton, and Wagner, 1999 for the relative effect of service interactions vs. service outcomes).

That being said, within the existing literature on CSS, relatively little research has focused on the effect of culture on service satisfaction (see Winsted 1997 and Stauss and Mang 1999 for exceptions). This seems to be a striking deficiency given that in the contemporary multi-cultural society of North America and the increasingly global presence of business firms, a service provider is often confronted with customers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Cultural differences often cause miscommunications, and conflicts are more likely when the two cultures are very different than when they are similar. Technically, this difference is called "cultural distance" (Triandis 2000). In the context of services, cultural distance can affect satisfaction in two ways. Firstly, since customer expectations are culturally based, cultural distance between the customer and provider can affect the evaluation of service performance. Secondly, in the case of service failures, either due to the disconfirmation of expectations or due to the actual service performance, customers may attribute the causes of failure differently depending on their culture. For instance, it has been found that customers from individualist (western) cultures tend to attribute failures more to the service provider; whereas, those from collectivist (eastern) cultures tend to attribute failure to the service context or situation (Krull 1993). The latter difference in attributions would affect service satisfaction.

Thus, adapting the policies and systems to fit the expectations and dispositions of culturally diverse customers can help global service firms (e.g. airlines) achieve a higher level of service satisfaction. Similarly, understanding the effect of culture on service satisfaction would also aid local firms operating in the North American context of customers from diverse cultures and ethnicities. Finally, understanding the responses and biases of culturally diverse constituencies also has broader policy implications for government and community services.

Stauss and Mang (1999) were the first to empirically investigate the role of culture in the context of services. They found that the cultural distance between the service provider and the customer had a significant impact on CSS. Specifically, they found that customers from Germany, the United States, and Japan, while traveling with the same international airline, had significant differences in their satisfaction with the service provider (i.e. airline staff). Stauss and Mang suggested that the differences in the culturally biased service expectations of the customers, and their

subsequent attributions of the service providers' responses, might have been a cause for these discrepant findings. However, they did not investigate the underlying mechanisms and the cause for these differences in CSS in inter-cultural service encounters.

In this paper, building on the initial findings in inter-cultural service encounters, we present a theoretical framework for explaining how CSS is affected by cultural distance between the customer and the service provider. We propose a theoretical model to investigate the effect of culture on consumer's responses to service failures and the ensuing effect on their satisfaction judgments. To empirically test the model we propose a unique quasi-experimental, web-based research design. The design employs a projective technique wherein respondents view hypothetical scenarios of service failures occurring in a restaurant. The scenarios manipulate the cultural background of the service provider and assess the impact of cultural distance on customers' responses to these failures, and the resulting effect on CSS. We also propose to investigate the moderating effect of the type of service failure (outcome vs. process) and service context (strong vs. weak) on the customer's response to service failure. To make the scenarios more realistic, and thus increase the validity of the research, multi-media stimulus material (viz., video clips of hypothetical service encounters in a restaurant) will be used in contrast to conventional paper-and-pencil studies that employ text-based scenarios. These multi-media stimuli will be integrated with an on-line questionnaire, and the entire study is to be conducted via the Internet.

In the sections to follow, the model and a set of hypotheses pertaining to the effects of cultural distance on CSS in service encounters are first presented. Thereafter, the research design is discussed in detail, including methodology, sampling procedure, factor manipulations, and the development and pre-testing of the multi-media stimulus materials. Finally, we discuss the managerial implications and theoretical contributions of our research agenda.

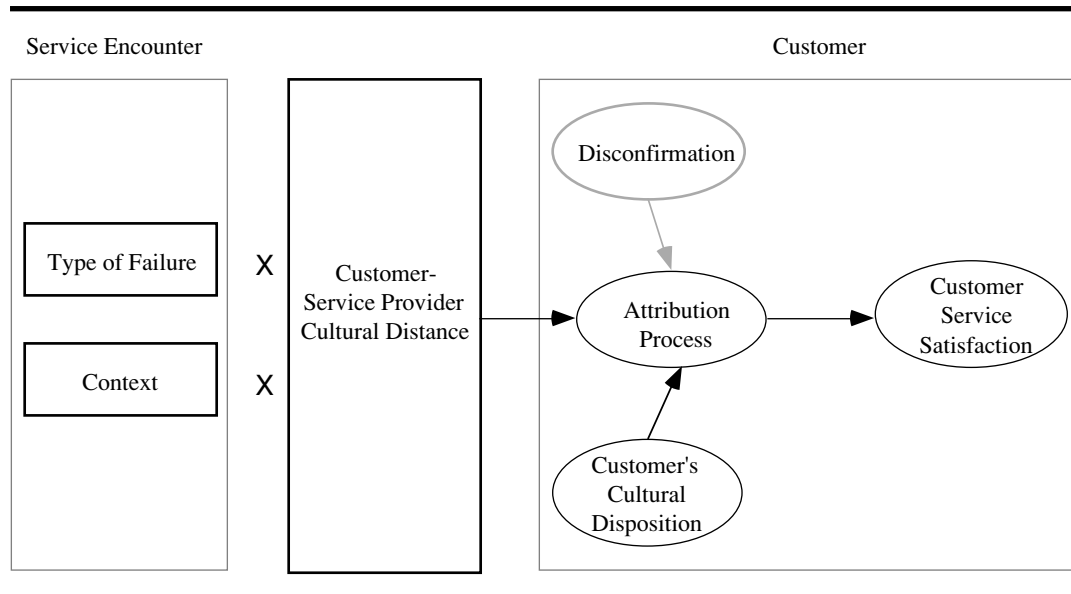
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical Model and Hypotheses

Figure 1 depicts our model for understanding CSS in inter-cultural service encounters. We propose to investigate the model in the context of service failures and show how the customer attribution process mediates the effect of cultural distance on CSS. In other words, we contend that when a service failure occurs in inter-cultural service encounters, CSS depends on the extent to which a customer attributes the failure to the service provider.

In our model we propose that when the cultural distance is large (e.g. an Anglo-American customer interacting with a Hispanic waiter in a restaurant), service failures would elicit more situational attributions (e.g. blaming failures on the cultural disparity with the service provider) than dispositional attributions (e.g. blaming failures to the person). In contrast, when cultural distance is small there are more dispositional attributions than situational ones. Thus, it can be expected that CSS would be positively related to cultural distance. The model also suggests that the attribution process would be affected by the culturally biased dispositions of the customer. Specifically, while customers with idiocentric dispositions (from individualist cultures, like Americans) who tend to use traits in describing other people (Duff and Newman 1997)

FIGURE 1
Theoretical Model for the Effect of Cultural Distance on Customer Service Satisfaction



Note: The “X”s denote interaction effects of *type of service failure* with *cultural distance*, and *service context* with *cultural distance*.

would focus on internal dispositions in making attributions (Menon, Morris, Chie, and Hong 1999), those with allocentric dispositions (from collectivist cultures, like Hispanics) would make attributions using the context, the situation, and group dispositions (Choi, Nesbett, and Norenzayan 1999). Finally, also included in the model are the potential effects of variables specific to the service encounter, namely the type of service failure (process vs. outcome) and, the service context (weak vs. strong). The model suggests that these two factors would interact with cultural distance to either enhance or attenuate situational versus dispositional attributions, and thus have a moderating effect on the resulting CSS. To be consistent with the literature, the model also includes the effect of expectancy disconfirmation (i.e. the differences between customer expectations and the actual performance) on CSS (cf. Oliver 1997). However, that is not the focus of this model and is only employed to control for variations in CSS due to differences in customers’ a-priori expectations.

Each of the different constructs included in the model is now elaborated upon, and hypotheses for their effect on the attribution process and on CSS are proposed.

Effect of Cultural Distance on CSS

Service satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) is the customer’s response, based on his/her personal judgment, that a service encounter provided a pleasant (or unpleasant) experience (Oliver 1997). A service encounter is a period of time during which a customer directly interacts with a service (Shostack 1985), and with a few exceptions, always involves an interpersonal, interaction between a customer and a service provider (Norman 1991). Since service encounters are interpersonal social encounters, a customer’s personal judgment of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is based on rules and expectations that vary from culture to culture (McCallum and Harrison 1985; Czepiel 1990). A customer therefore attaches meaning to a service encounter by comparing it to his/her culturally based standard or expectation.

Culture is a shared meaning system. It is a learned phenomenon that simultaneously determines the perceptions of an individual and affects his/her behavior. Customers and service providers can each be expected to automatically act in ways that are specific to their respective cultures. Cultural differences between customers and service providers can often cause miscommunications and conflicts, due to the differences in their culturally biased norms and scripts of appropriate behavior. Such conflicts are likely to be greater when the two cultures are very different than when they are similar, referred to as “cultural distance” (Triandis 1994). While Hofstede (2001) classifies cultures along five dimensions (individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and time orientation), according to Triandis (1996) the individualism-collectivism syndrome appears to be the most significant cultural difference among cultures. As per Triandis (2001), Shweder and Bourne (1984), and Mills and Clark (1982) individualist societies (i.e. “Western” societies) value personal initiative, autonomy, leadership, and achievement over social harmony, conformity, cooperation, and tradition. Individualist societies also give priority to personal goals over the goals of in-groups and people behave primarily on the basis of their attitudes rather than the norms of their in-groups. On the other hand, collectivist societies (i.e. “Eastern” societies) value social harmony, conformity, cooperation, and tradition over personal initiative, autonomy, leadership, and achievement. Collectivist societies are especially concerned with relationships and people are interdependent within their in-groups, give priority to the goals of their in-groups, and shape their behavior primarily on the basis of in-group norms. The latter aspect of cultural differences (i.e., individualism-collectivism) would be the focus of our conceptualization of “cultural distance” between the customer and the provider in inter-cultural service encounters.

Beginning with Winsted’s (1997) observation that customers from different cultures evaluate services differently, Stauss and Mang (1999) hypothesized that “problematic encounters” would be

more frequent among inter-cultural service interactions involving a large cultural distance between customer and service provider than among those involving a small cultural distance. They tested their hypotheses by conducting an empirical study with German, Japanese, and American passengers during the airport check-in process in Tokyo, Frankfurt, and Atlanta. The results of their study were in direct opposition to their hypotheses. They concluded that, "In the study, negative critical incidents do not prevail among inter-cultural encounters but—against all expectations—among intra-cultural encounters" (p. 340).

To explain their discrepant findings, Stauss and Mang (1999) conjectured that the higher level of service satisfaction in inter-cultural service encounters might be explained by considering the effect of cultural distance on the expectancy disconfirmation (ED) process. Customer service expectations are established based on the customer's cultural standards. It is against those standards that expectations are established, and against which actual service is compared in the ED process. With small cultural distance, the customer may feel that the service provider should know his/her standards and therefore feel that the service provider should provide service accordingly. With large cultural distance, however, the customer may feel that performance failure by a service provider is partly due to a mismatch between his/her cultural standards so that the service provider did not know the a-priori standards in the customer's culture. The following hypothesis is suggested by Stauss and Mang's (1999) finding:

H1: The cultural distance between the customer and service provider would have a positive effect on CSS, such that satisfaction would be higher when the cultural distance is large than when it is small.

Effect of Customer's Cultural Disposition on the Attribution Processes

Although Stauss and Mang's (1999) arguments about the role of ED in inter-cultural service encounters is important, it is not sufficient to explain its effect on satisfaction judgments. After ED occurs there is an intermediate attribution process that leads customers to make satisfaction/dissatisfaction judgments. Positioning of the attribution process after ED and before CSS is consistent with work in consumer behavior by Bitner (1990), Folkes, Koletsky, and Graham (1987), and Oliver and DeSarbo (1988). Attributions are what people perceive to be the causes of their own behavior, the behaviors of others, and the events they observe. Weiner (1985) found that people make spontaneous causal attributions, particularly in cases of unexpected and negative events such as in service failures. According to attribution theory, a customer (i.e. the observer) attributes the cause of a service failure to either the service provider or to the situation (e.g. the management or someone or something other than the service provider such as the situation or environment). Attribution to the service provider is referred to as a dispositional attribution and attribution to the management, situation, or environment is referred to as a situational attribution. Does culture affect customer's attributions of service failures?

An extensive body of research (e.g. Crittendon 1991; Fletcher and Ward 1988; Miller 1984, 1986; Schuster, Fosterling, and Weiner 1989; Shweder and Bourne 1984; Smith and Whitehead 1984) has found that people from collectivist cultures tend to make more situational attributions (i.e. attribute the cause to the context or environment), whereas those from individualist cultures make more dispositional ones (i.e. attribute the cause to the person's attitudes and intentions). Thus, it can be expected that in the context of service failures, people from individualist cultures would tend to make disposition-heavy attributions and those from collectivist

cultures would make situation-heavy attributions. A dispositional attribution would correspond to a customer blaming the service provider, either his competence or motivation in performing the service; whereas a situational attribution would correspond to attributing the discrepant service performance to the provider's cultural norms or to the lack of understanding of the customer's culturally biased expectations.

Recently it has been suggested that while individualism-collectivism are appropriate constructs to discriminate cultures at the societal level, they do not capture the individual-level differences within a culture. Traindis, Leung, Villareal, and Clack (1985) and Smith and Bond (1999) have proposed the concepts of *idiocentrism* and *allocentrism* to describe individual-level attributes of cultural values. Individuals who are more individualist in self-concept have been termed "idiocentric," whereas those who are more collectivist are "allocentric." Both of these self-concepts have horizontal and vertical dimensions based on social relationships. Horizontal patterns accept equality as a given (i.e. assume that one self is more or less like every other self). Vertical patterns accept hierarchy as a given (i.e. accept that one self is different from other self). Individuals within a culture may differ on the extent to which they are idiocentric or allocentric, but at the societal level people from individualist cultures are higher on idiocentrism and those from collectivist cultures are higher on allocentrism. Corresponding to the differences in predispositions described earlier for individualist versus collectivist cultures, idiocentrics tend to focus on internal dispositions in making attributions (Menon, Morris, Chiu, and Hong 1999), while allocentrics tend to use the context, situation, and group dispositions (Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan 1999). The following hypotheses pertain to the effect of the customer's cultural disposition:

H2: The customer's cultural disposition will affect the attribution process such that:

- a) Idiocentrism will have a positive effect on dispositional attributions.
- b) Allocentrism will have a positive effect on situational attributions.

Furthermore,

H3: The customer's cultural disposition will moderate the effect of cultural distance on the attribution process such that:

- a) Cultural distance will have a greater positive effect on situational attributions in the case of customers with an allocentric cultural disposition compared to those with an idiocentric cultural disposition.
- b) Cultural distance will have a greater negative effect on dispositional attributions in the case of customers with an allocentric cultural disposition compared to those with an idiocentric cultural disposition.

Effect of Service Failure Type and Service Context

Service failure type. When the results of a service encounter are below the customer's expectations, the service encounter may be termed a failure, of which there are two general types, outcome and process (Bitner, Booms and Tetreault 1990; Hoffman, Kelley and Rotalsky 1995; Keaveney 1995; Mohr and Bitner 1995). Outcome is what customers receive from the service, and process involves the manner in which the service is delivered. In an outcome failure the organization does not fulfill the basic need of the customer (e.g. a restaurant does not provide a meal of the type or quality that a customer orders). In a process failure the delivery of

the service is flawed or deficient in some way (e.g. a waiter in a restaurant provides slow or inattentive service). Smith, Bolton, and Wagner (1999) found that in both restaurant and hotel service encounters, customers who experience process failures were more dissatisfied than those who experience outcome failures, suggesting that face-to-face encounters which are directly attributable to the behavior of the service provider result in a lower level of CSS than outcome failures which result from events not directly observed by the customer. This finding is also consistent with reports by Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault (1990) and Keaveney (1995) that customers often cite process failures more frequently than outcome failures for evaluating service encounters. Hence it is proposed that:

- H4:* The type of service failure will moderate the effect of cultural distance on the attribution processes such that:
- a) Cultural distance will have a greater positive effect on situational attributions when there is an outcome failure as compared to a process failure in service performance.
 - b) Cultural distance will have a greater negative effect on dispositional attributions when there is an outcome failure as compared to a process failure in service performance.

Service context. The context, or setting, of a service interaction may possibly influence the attribution processes. In a strong context wherein the customer's culture and the ethnic ambience of the service setting are dissimilar (e.g. an Anglo customer in a Cuban restaurant), cultural distance with the service provider may be more salient to the customer, and this would amplify its effect on attribution and CSS. In a weak context wherein the customer's culture and the ethnic ambience of the service setting are similar (e.g. an Anglo customer in an American restaurant), cultural distance would attenuate the effects of cultural distance. Therefore, it is posited:

- H5:* The service context will moderate the effect of cultural distance on the attribution processes such that:
- a) Cultural distance will have a greater positive effect on situational attributions when the service context is strong as compared to when it is weak.
 - b) Cultural distance will have a greater negative effect on dispositional attributions when the service context is strong as compared to when it is weak.

We propose to test our theoretical model using a web-based study with a quasi-experimental design employing video-clips of hypothetical service encounters. We now describe the research design and methodology in detail.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The proposed study will utilize a 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects design, in which the cultural distance (small vs. large), service failure type (process vs. outcome), and service setting context (weak versus strong) would be manipulated using scenarios of hypothetical service encounters in a restaurant. Respondents would be asked to project themselves into the scenario and then respond to questions on a computer-mediated questionnaire administered over the Internet.

Stimulus Development

The selection of service encounters in a restaurant setting was the result of extensive pretesting of scenarios in text form. Scenarios were created that involved an American customer in super-

market, restaurant, bank, and lawyer's offices contexts in both Canadian and Japanese settings. Scenarios were tested for realism using a convenience sample of MBA students at a Midwestern US University, with the restaurant context appearing to be the most credible. In order to make the study more relevant to contemporary society in the United States, the settings for the restaurant interactions were revised to be Cuban and American, and the number of scenarios expanded to eight versions with manipulations of the three factors of interest (i.e. cultural distance, service failure type, and context). Cultural distance was manipulated by the cultural differences between the customer and the provider, namely the waiter in the scenarios (American vs. Hispanic) and the respondent's reported ethnicity (Anglo vs. Hispanic). Service failure type was manipulated by varying the service performance in the scenarios, such that in one condition the service delivery is slow (a process failure) and in the other condition the delivered food is inconsistent with what was ordered (an outcome failure). Context manipulation was achieved by the match/mismatch between the waiter's cultural background (American vs. Hispanic) and the type of restaurant (American vs. Cuban). Thus, for example, a Hispanic waiter in an American restaurant would be a weak context and a Hispanic waiter in a Cuban restaurant would signify a strong context. The eight scenarios were pre-tested in a think-aloud exercise with a convenience sample consisting of both Hispanics and White Anglos. The pre-test consisted of a "think-aloud" exercise wherein respondents were asked to read aloud the scenarios and provide a verbal assessment and interpretation of the scenario situation. There were no major problems with the clarity of the scenarios and the different factor manipulations. Students of the National Broadcasting Society's Alpha Epsilon Rho national honor society (under the supervision of a faculty member) then filmed the text-based scenarios in a television production studio at the University of Miami's School of Communication. The raw film clips were edited to produce eight broadcast quality videos, each of four to five minute duration. These digital videos were then integrated into a web-based electronic questionnaire. The web-based questionnaires were then pretested for their ease of use, downloading time, and clarity of instructions using a convenience sample in Miami-Dade County, Florida. No significant problems were identified in the web-based administration of the questionnaire.

Methodology

Procedure. Using a personal computer, respondents would log on to a website dedicated to our research and complete the survey on-line. Pretesting indicates that approximately ten minutes will be required for each respondent to complete the survey.

Respondent population. Respondents would be recruited from the middle class population of White Anglos and Hispanics in culturally diverse Miami-Dade County M-DC), Florida. M-DC's population of 2,246,000 is an amalgamation of three major cultural groups, 57.6% Hispanics (including Cuban and non-Cuban), 21.5% White Anglos (White non-Hispanics), and 20.9% Black (African American and Haitian). This population has been chosen to enhance the external validity of the study such that the respondent sample is representative of the actual customer response in intercultural service encounters.

Respondent recruitment. Respondents will be recruited by distributing flyers at various locations in Miami-Dade County, Florida and by direct e-mail solicitation. Both the flyer and the e-mail solicitation will invite prospective respondents to log on to the web site dedicated to the study. An incentive will be offered in the form of an opportunity to participate in a raffle, if desired, in which five prizes of \$100 each will be offered.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The theoretical contributions of our proposed research agenda are twofold. First and foremost, we will shed light on the role of culture in customer satisfaction with service encounters. Although the concept of culture has a long and rich history of research in social psychology, it has hitherto not been given adequate attention in the CSS literature. We hope to fill this gap by examining the effect of culture at both an individual level (i.e. attribution process) and at an inter-personal level (i.e. cultural distance). We propose that at an individual level, cultural dispositions can directly affect the extent to which a customer attributes a service failure to the provider, thus decreasing CSS. On the other hand, at an inter-personal level, cultural-differences between the customer and provider can decrease these attributions to the service provider and thus attenuate the effect on CSS. Integrating the effect of cultural differences and attributions with the current CSS literature would enrich our understanding of service encounters in the multi-cultural context of the US society. Secondly, we also hope to make a methodological contribution by enhancing the efficacy of using projective techniques in studying service interactions. Specifically, our use of enriched multi-media stimuli would help circumvent the criticisms about the validity of hypothetical scenarios as an investigative technique. Moreover, the web-based administration of the study among representative populations highlights how technology can enhance the external validity of academic research. The latter is particularly valuable to managers who are often skeptical about the applicability of research that utilize convenience sampling (e.g. undergraduate students).

The proposed research agenda also has important practical implications. The insights provided by this research could help firms to effectively manage the service delivery process, particularly those services that include inter-personal interactions. Firstly, by being cognizant of the culturally biased expectations of different cultural or ethnic groups. For instance, while Anglo Americans—idiocentrics—might prefer to have more instrumental, goal-based expectations from the provider, Hispanics—allocentrics—may want the provider to be more friendly and approachable. The service provider could differentially emphasize these two elements in the performance as well as advertisements. Secondly, by understanding the culturally predisposed attribution processes, and accordingly adapting the service delivery (e.g. bank or restaurant in a Hispanic neighborhood) to avoid dispositional attributions of slow service, marketers could emphasize the contextual elements by creating a distinctive cultural ambience in the premises.

To summarize, it is our hope that this research would provide a theoretical framework to incorporate culture into the extensive body of knowledge in the CSS literature. From a more pragmatic standpoint, we hope to sensitize service providers to specific elements of the cultural or ethnic background that affect customer satisfaction judgments.

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Antecedents and Consequences of Service Quality in Online Banking: An Application of the SERVQUAL Instrument

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INTRODUCTION

During the past decade, the online service industry has witnessed tremendous growth, much of it spurred by the Internet revolution (Keaveney and Parthasarathy, 2001). Especially, the potential of the Web as a commercial medium is widely recognized and the growth in online service industries such as online banking has increased rapidly. In addition to Internet companies, traditional organizations are investing a huge amount of money and effort in information systems to provide online services through the Web. The underlying assumption of their investment is that, because online services provide their customers with convenience, interactivity, relatively low cost, and a high degree of customization/personalization, they will enhance customer satisfaction and retention more effectively than offline-based services (Khalifa & Liu, 2001). To justify their investment in online services, many organizations are trying to measure the quality of their online services and investigate the relationships between service quality and customer satisfaction. However, a formal methodology for measuring online service quality is not well developed yet.

Traditionally, many studies of service marketing have tried to define service quality and develop instruments to measure it. Since Parasuraman et al. (1988) introduced a service quality instrument, called SERVQUAL, many studies have used SERVQUAL to measure service quality in various domains, ranging from financial services (Lin, 1999), health services (Dean, 1999), travel agent services (Kaynama, 2000), and retailing services (Mehta, 2000), to restaurants (Lee and Hing 1995). However, since SERVQUAL was originally developed to measure service quality delivered through regular offline channels, its use in the Information System (IS) domain could be somewhat problematic (Van Dyke et al., 1999). Recently, a few studies have begun investigating the suitability of SERVQUAL in assessing the quality of online services (Gefen & Devine, 2001).

The main objective of this study is to investigate the usefulness and applicability of SERVQUAL in measuring online service quality and its relationships to customer satisfaction and customer retention. By exploring the suitability of SERVQUAL and the outcome of service quality, this study enhances understanding of the causal relationships among service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer retention, in the context of online banking services.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUNDS

Online Banking

Internet has emerged as a key competitive arena for the future of financial services (Cronin, 1998) in that online banking offers customers more features with lower cost than traditional banking activities. Since the Security First Network Bank (SFNB) first started its Internet bank on the web site (www.SFNB.com), more than 1,500 financial institutions have made plans to offer certain forms of Internet banking in 3 years. Advanced technologies enable banks to utilize new banking products, such as a smart card and

electronic money, through the Internet. Internet banking is easier, more convenient and offers more features with lower cost than home banking in the 80's. Customers' responses to the Internet banking system have been so much different from the home banking due to its easy accessibility. Customers can access their account from anywhere in the world and at any time. To secure loyal customers, many banks try to provide customers with unique online experiences that customers cannot access through the offline channels. Considering that enormous capital investment is needed for developing these online banking services, it is very critical for them to measure the service quality produced by online banking systems.

Service Quality

Service quality is generally perceived to be a tool that can be used to create a competitive advantage and therefore, substantial research into service and service quality has been undertaken in the last 20 years. Bitner et al. (1990) define service quality as "the consumers' overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of the organization and its services." The most common definition of service quality is the discrepancy between consumer's expectations and perceptions of the service received. Accordingly, service quality is defined as how well a delivered service level matches customer's expectation. Parasuraman et al. (1988, 1991) identified more detailed dimensions of service quality and developed a well-known instrument, called SERVQUAL, to measure customer's perceptions and expectations from service. The SERVQUAL instrument consists of five underlying dimensions, with two sets of 22 item statements for the 'expectation' and 'perception' sections of the questionnaire. Perceived service quality is measured by subtracting customer perception scores from customer expectation scores, both for each dimension and overall. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL are (Parasuraman et al., 1988, 1991):

- (1) Tangibles, which pertain to the physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials.
- (2) Reliability, which refers to the ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately.
- (3) Responsiveness, which refers to the willingness of service providers to help customers and provide prompt service.
- (4) Assurance, which relates to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.
- (5) Empathy, which refers to the provision of caring and individualized attention to customers.

Since the SERVQUAL was developed in 1988, various researchers have recognized that both the instrument itself and the conceptualization of service quality may benefit from further refinement (for example, Finn and Lamb 1991, Lee and Hing 1995). They have argued that the SERVQUAL instrument needs to be customized to the specific service area. Cronin and Taylor (1992) have developed instruments to measure service quality based only on customer perceptions. After many studies have examined the suitability of SERVQUAL in measuring service quality in different types of service, they tried to adapt the original SERVQUAL items to various service contexts by slightly changing the original items.

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Online Service Quality

During the past several years, some conceptual and empirical studies have attempted to address the key attributes of service quality directly or indirectly related to online service and, SERVQUAL has been widely accepted and used in measuring Information System service quality (Van Dyke et al., 1999). Yang & Jun (2002) redefined the traditional service quality dimensions in the context of online services, and suggested an instrument consisting of seven online service dimensions (reliability, access, ease of use, personalization, security, credibility, and responsiveness). In addition, Barnes & Vidgen (2002) introduced a method for assessing the service quality of e-commerce web-sites, called WebQual. Many studies, including these two, have introduced a variety of instruments without testing the suitability of SERVQUAL as an online service measure. The objective of this study is to explore the suitability of SERVQUAL in the context of online banking services, and examine the relative importance of the service quality dimensions of SERVQUAL to overall customer satisfaction and retention.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The growing importance of service quality leads us to examine the following questions concerning the relationships among service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer retention in the online banking service area.

- Is service quality significantly associated with customer satisfaction?
- Does the level of service quality influence customer satisfaction, and increase the level of customer retention?

Mummalaneni and Wilson (1989) argue that satisfaction leads to binding the customer and the seller together and strengthening their relationship. Once a customer has decided that he or she is no longer satisfied with the product or service, the process of the dissolution of the bonding between the customer and the provider becomes salient. Also, there is widespread consensus among scholars (e.g. Wilson, 1995) that greater satisfaction increases the level of a customer's commitment to the seller. Recently, in the information system area, some researches began to try to investigate the relationship between web site quality and customer satisfaction. For example, McKinney et al. (2002) found that Web-customer satisfaction is determined by the nine quality-related constructs. In a study of electronic commerce channel preference, Devaraj et al. (2002) also showed that service quality is one of the major determinants of consumer satisfaction.

One of the key issues for online service providers as a result of the increased competition is "churn," or customer movement to the competing company. Therefore, how to increase the level of customer retention has been one of the key questions to most marketing managers in the online service industry. Some marketing researchers have showed that customer satisfaction is the key factor for determining the service switching intentions (Keaveney and Parthasarathy, 2001). Using data on the online industry, Chen and Hitt (2002) investigated how service characteristics affect the level of customer switching and retention. Similarly, Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) emphasize the importance of measuring future behavioral intentions of customers to assess their potential to remain with or leave the service organization. On these grounds, we have the following research hypotheses regarding service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer retention.

- H1: Service quality of online banking is positively related to the level of customer satisfaction.

H2: Customer satisfaction is positively related to the level of customer retention.

H3: Service quality of online banking is positively related to the level of customer retention.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design and Sample

Prior studies (Kettinger & Lee, 1994, Van Dyke et al., 1997) empirically tested whether SERVQUAL is an appropriate instrument to assess IS (Information System) service quality. In this study, online-bank-adapted SERVQUAL was designed to deal with the unique features of online banking services. The basic methodology was to apply the modified SERVQUAL instrument to the study sample, and then validate the measurement model and structural equation model. The relationships among service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer retention were also investigated and the research hypotheses were tested.

Data for model testing were obtained through an online survey. With the help of one of the major commercial banks in Korea, a survey was administered via the bank's website. From the perspectives of the five dimensions of SERVQUAL, the survey measured user expectation for the online bank in general and perceived performance of the online bank. The appendix shows the questionnaire items used in the survey. In all, 740 responses were used for the statistical analysis and model testing.

Data Purification

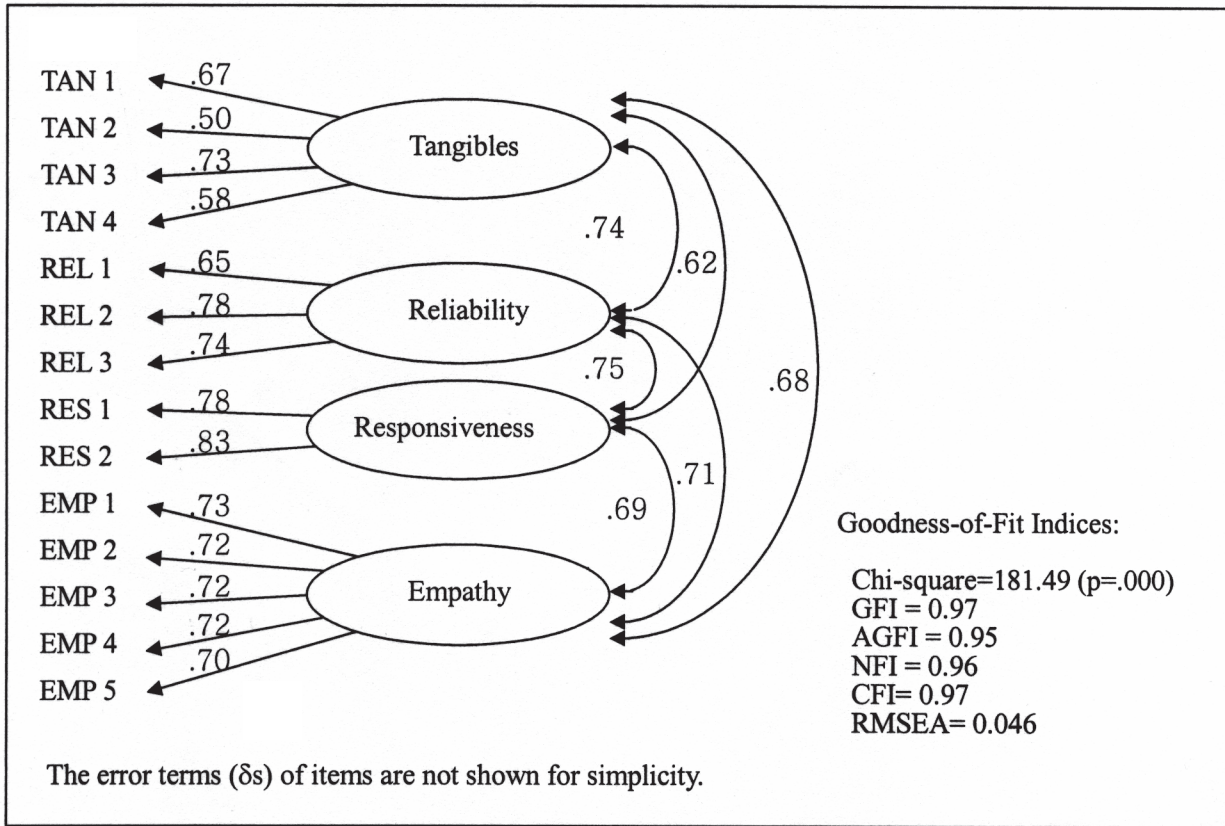
In this research, we followed the updated measure development paradigm proposed by Gerbing and Anderson (1988) as well as the traditional procedure suggested by Churchill (1979) to develop better measures of marketing constructs. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted for data screening and dimensionality check. Nine items were dropped after the EFA procedure because they are cross-loaded onto more than one factor. The measurement items of the 'assurance' dimension were not properly loaded resulting in the complete deletion of this dimension. Therefore, four dimensions of SERVQUAL, Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Empathy, were used for the final analysis. As one of the major problems of SERVQUAL, Van Dyke et al. (1997, 1999) pointed out the dimensional instability of SERVQUAL. The service quality factors or dimensions originally defined by Parasuraman et al. (1991) have not emerged as such in subsequent researches. Especially, past research has shown that the Information Service(IS)-context-modified version of the SERVQUAL instrument produced four dimensions (Kettinger and Lee, 1994).

In this study, the assurance dimension of SERVQUAL was dropped in the context of online banking. One possible explanation for this result can be found from the unique features of online services. Instead of interacting with IS personnel or systems through offline channels, online service users heavily rely on the non-human interface of banking services. Consequently, customers' evaluations for service quality are mainly influenced by the features and the security of online bank web sites. In other words, in online banking, customers would not accurately evaluate the assurance dimension of SERVQUAL which is defined by the knowledge and courtesy of administrators. Instead, they are more concerned about the security of their financial transactions and, therefore, reliability would be the most representative dimension of service quality.

Measurement Model and Second Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In an effort to achieve reliability and validity of the measurement model, first-order and second-order confirmatory factor analysis

FIGURE 1
First Order Model of Online Banking Service Quality



sis (CFA) were conducted for the four-dimensional model of SERVQUAL using gap scores calculated from the 14 pairs of items, and this produced satisfactory results.

Figure 1 and Table 1 illustrate the estimated parameters of the four-construct, first-order factor model. As shown, the indicator loadings of items to their respective constructs are strong. The t-scores range from 11.37 to 19.46, indicating that all factor loadings are significant and providing evidence to support the convergent validity of the items measured (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Composite reliability, a measure of internal consistency comparable to coefficient alpha (Fornell and Larcker 1981), is in excess of 0.70, implying acceptable level of reliability for each of constructs. As also illustrated in Figure 1, the first-order constructs exhibit a moderate amount of correlation among themselves. To assess the degree of these associations, a formal test of discriminant validity was conducted by using chi-square difference test. This suggests that the better model will be the one in which the two constructs are viewed as distinct, yet correlated, factors (Anderson and Gerbing 1988, Bagozzi et al. 1991). In all six paired comparisons, the chi-square difference test was significant, suggesting that the constructs are distinct. Figure 2 illustrates the structure and estimated parameters of the second-order factor model of online banking service quality. Consistent with the first-order model, the items show strong measurement properties. The paths from the second-order factor of service quality to the first-order dimensions are strong and significant. Hence, we conclude that the higher-order concept of the service quality of online banking seems to be well represented by a second order factor model. In sum, all these diagnostics suggest that the measurement model of online banking service quality should be accepted as a good representation of the data.

Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

To test the research hypotheses and investigate the relationships among online service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer retention, we conducted covariance structure analysis by using LISREL 8. The final structural model of online banking service was tested and, as seen in Figure 3, the results showed that service quality has positive impact on customer satisfaction (b=0.41) and that customer satisfaction increases the level of customer retention (b=0.80) accordingly. Therefore, research hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported with strong statistical significance. However the direct impact of service quality on the level of customer retention was not statistically significant and hypothesis 3 was not supported. This means that service quality influences customer retention level indirectly through the level of customer satisfaction. Some researches have suggested that customer satisfaction is an antecedent factor of service quality (Bolton and Drew 1991). However our research model indicates that this may not be the case and provides the empirical support for the notion that service quality in fact leads to customer satisfaction and, furthermore, an increase in customer retention. This confirms the recent results of Keaveney and Parthasarathy (2001) that online service continuers show a higher satisfaction level than online service switchers. Cronin and Taylor (1992) also showed that service quality influences customer satisfaction, even though they measured service quality with perception only.

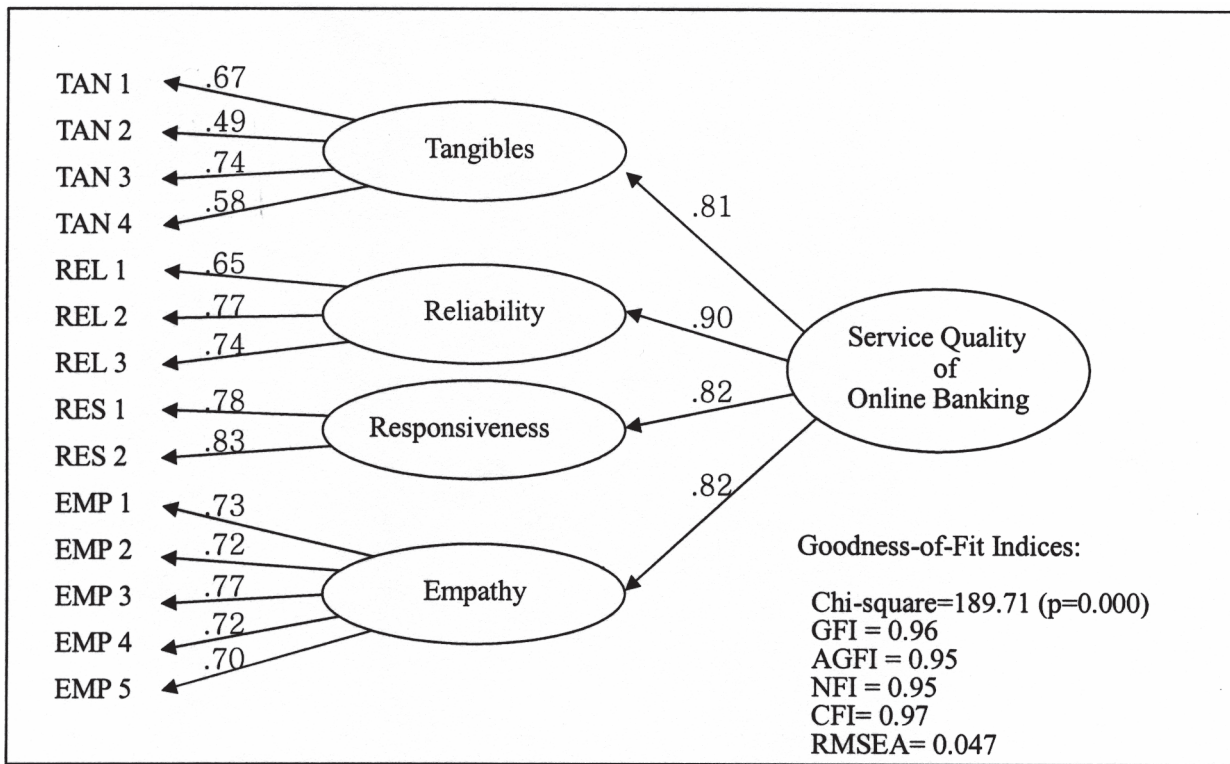
The results of model testing showed satisfactory goodness-of-fit indices. In general, the goodness-of-fit was high (GFI=0.94) indicating that a major proportion of the variances and covariances in the data was accounted for by the model. More specifically, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA=0.046) is below

TABLE 1
Properties of Measurement Model of Online Banking Service Quality

Construct Item	Standardized Loading	t- value	Composite Reliability	Cronbach' s Alpha
Tangibles			0.72	0.72
Q1	0.67	-		
Q2	0.50	11.37*		
Q3	0.73	15.34*		
Q4	0.58	12.93*		
Reliability			0.78	0.76
Q5	0.65	-		
Q6	0.78	16.59*		
Q7	0.74	16.17*		
Responsiveness			0.79	0.78
Q10	0.78	-		
Q11	0.83	19.12*		
Empathy			0.85	0.85
Q18	0.73	-		
Q19	0.72	18.36*		
Q20	0.77	19.46*		
Q21	0.72	18.37*		
Q22	0.70	17.79*		

* Indicates significance at $p < 0.01$ level.

FIGURE 2
Second Order Model of Online Banking Service Quality

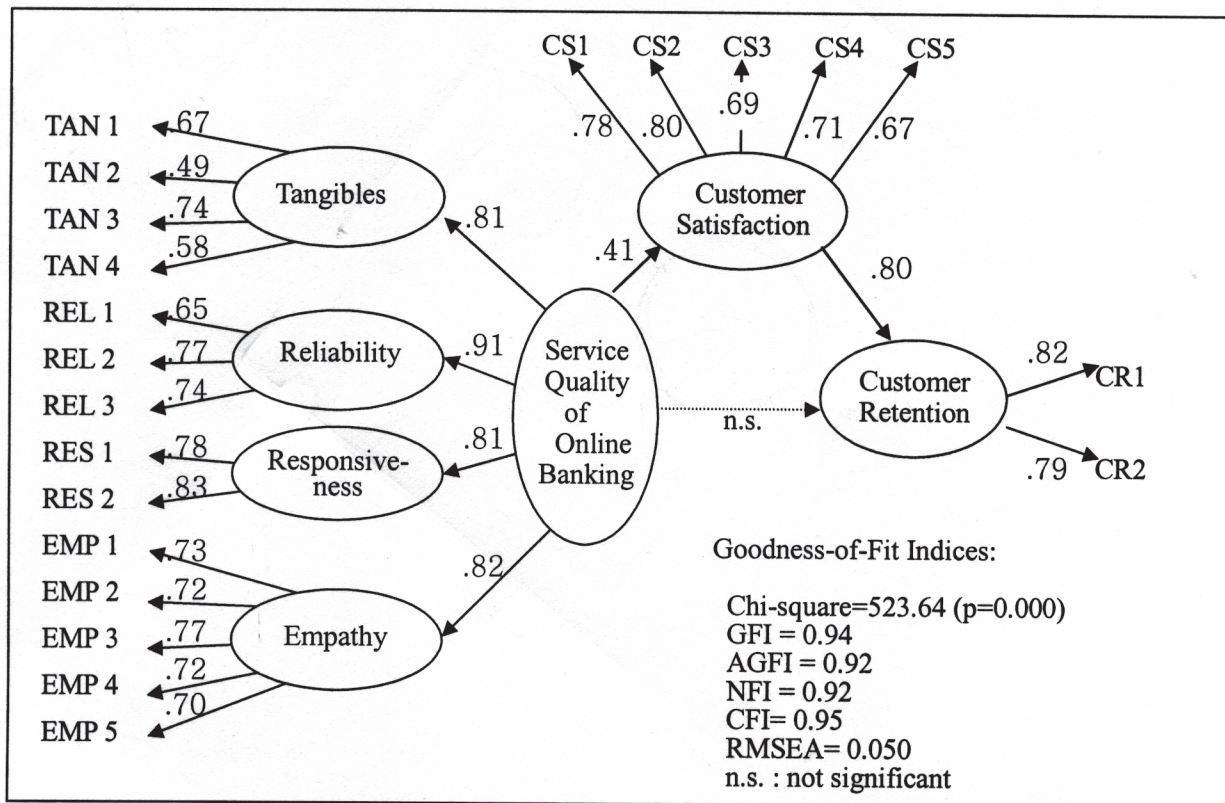


the .08 cutoff recommended in the literature (e.g. Browne & Cudeck 1993). The adjusted GFI and other fit indices (AGFI=0.92, NFI=0.92, NNFI=0.95, CFI=0.95) clearly meet the requirements recommended in the literature (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988, Baumgartner

and Homburg, 1996) and these magnitudes indicate that the model fits the data adequately.

Finally, to make sure of the order condition of the causal structure of service quality, satisfaction, and retention, we analyzed

FIGURE 3
Structural Model of Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Customer Retention



other alternative models. For example, we examined the direct effect of service quality on customer retention without including customer satisfaction in the model. We also ran the model where the effects of satisfaction are mediated by customer retention. Testing all these alternative models did not violate the causal structure of the proposed model and we accepted this as a final model.

Conclusions and Implications

Many studies have emphasized the need to develop valid and reliable measures of the quality of Information System (IS) service. Most of them have made much efforts to apply SERVQUAL, a commonly used measure of service quality, to IS-specific environments. They have introduced the IS-adapted SERVQUAL, and examined its usability in different IS settings. Since many companies have heavily used the Internet to interact with their business partners and customers, the online service quality that they provide has become a primary concern in Internet business area. We introduced the modified version of the SERVQUAL instrument for online banking and, from the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, our study suggested a four-factor model of SERVQUAL including Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, and Empathy. Furthermore, we explored the relationships among customer satisfaction, customer retention, and service quality. This study reveals that SERVQUAL is an appropriate instrument for measuring the quality of online banking services.

The results from the present study suggest several implications for the use of SERVQUAL in the online banking area. This study has the potential to make theoretical, managerial, and methodological contributions to the analysis of service quality. Theoretically, we attempted to investigate the causal relationships among

service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer retention. As seen in the Figure 3, the level of service quality has positive impact on customer satisfaction and, the level of customer satisfaction influences the level of customer retention accordingly. Against the study of Bolton and Drew (1991), our study shows that service quality is an antecedent factor of customer satisfaction and retention. It is an interesting finding that service quality does not directly influence the level of customer retention. Managerially, this research provides company managers with a scale to assess the quality of their service from the perspective of the four underlying dimensions. This study also provides marketing managers, especially in the online banking area, with an insight to understand how to increase customer retention level. Methodologically, this research attempted to examine the suitability of SERVQUAL to measure the service quality in the online banking area. The assessments of reliabilities and validities of SERVQUAL through LISREL analysis confirm the correspondence rules between the empirical and theoretical concepts (Bagozzi 1984). These methodological attempts and the purified measurement items of the study will provide a valuable guidance to the future empirical research into online service quality.

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APPENDIX
Questionnaire Items of Online Banking Service Quality

Dimension	Item (Performance items only)
Tangibles	Q1) XYZ online bank has up-to-date equipment & technology. Q2) The web-site of XYZ online bank is visually appealing. Q3) The web-site of XYZ online bank makes you find information easily. Q4) The web site of XYZ online bank provides you with valuable information. Q4-1)* The web site of XYZ online bank is easy to use and navigate.
Reliability	Q5) When XYZ online bank promises to do something by a certain time, it does so. Q6) When there is a problem, XYZ online bank shows a sincere interest in solving it. Q7) XYZ online bank performs the service right first time. Q8)* XYZ online bank provides its services at the time it promises to do so. Q9)* XYZ online bank insists on error-free records.
Responsiveness	Q10) Administrators of XYZ online bank tell you exactly when the service will be performed Q11) Administrators of XYZ online bank give you prompt service. Q12)* Administrators of XYZ online bank are always willing to help you. Q13)* Administrators of XYZ online bank are never too busy to respond to your questions.
Assurance	Q14)* Administrators of XYZ online bank show the confidence in customers. Q15)* You feel safe in your transactions with XYZ online bank. Q16)* Administrators of XYZ online bank are consistently courteous with you. Q17) *Administrators of XYZ online bank have the knowledge to answer your questions
Empathy	Q18) XYZ online bank gives you individual attention. Q19) Help desks or call centers of XYZ online bank have operating hours convenient to all its customers. Q20) Help desks, call centers, and web administrators of XYZ online bank give you personal attention. Q21) Help desks, call centers, and web administrators of XYZ online bank have your best interests at heart. Q22) Help desks, call centers, and web administrators of XYZ online bank understand your specific needs

* These items were deleted in the final analysis.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Branding Across Cultures: The Role of Analytic and Holistic Thinking

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Understanding how consumers in different parts of the world respond to branding activities is an important issue in marketing today. However, most of the existing research on branding has been conducted with only American consumers. There are indications that culture may influence how branding activities are interpreted. Bottomley and Holden (2001) used existing data sets to suggest that brand extension evaluations may vary across countries. Roth (1995) showed that individualism and power-distance, two of the key dimensions of culture, can influence whether a functional or a social brand image positioning is successful. As these studies suggest, culture may influence branding in many ways.

In this session, cultural differences in responses to brand extension were examined using a recent framework from cultural psychology. Specifically all three papers adopted a framework proposed by Nisbett et al (2001), which suggests that Western cultures tend to engage in analytic thinking, while Eastern cultures tend to engage in holistic thinking. Holistic thinking is defined as "involving an orientation to the context or field as a whole, including attention to relationships between a focal object and the field." Analytic thinking "involves a detachment of the object from its context, a tendency to focus on attributes of the object to assign it to categories."

Each paper addressed a different aspect of the analytic-holistic thinking process and its impact on brand extension evaluations. The first paper, by Alokparna Monga Basu and Deborah Roedder John, used the analytic-holistic thinking framework to hypothesize that differences in styles of thinking influence the way in which consumers from an Eastern culture versus a Western culture evaluate brand extension fit. They proposed that *Westerners focus on attributes of the extension whereas Easterners take a broader view*. Findings from two studies found that, under certain conditions, consumers from an Eastern culture (India) perceived a higher fit between the brand and the extension than did consumers from a Western culture (United States), leading to more favorable brand extension evaluations for Easterners.

The second paper, by Sharon Ng and Michael Houston, expanded on the theme of cultural influences on branding by addressing how consumers in different cultures vary in the accessibility of brand exemplars versus brand attributes. Drawing upon the analytic-holistic and the independent-interdependent frameworks, the authors found that *brand attribute information is more accessible among westerners, whereas brand exemplars are more accessible among easterners*. In addition, they found that when evaluating brand extensions, consumers in different cultures differ in the way they perceive fit between the brand and the extension category.

The third paper, by Yeosun Yoon and Zeynep Gurhan-Canli, also used the analytic-holistic framework to examine how consumers in different cultures use diagnostic versus non-diagnostic information in evaluating brand extensions. The authors found that when exposed to low and moderate fit brand extensions, *East Asians (compared to Westerners) provided more favorable brand extension evaluations because they took into account a variety of non-diagnostic information*.

The session concluded with a discussion of conceptual and methodological issues in studying cultural differences, lead by the session discussion leader, Durairaj Maheswaran. Topics included

experimental methods for examining processes responsible for cultural differences, issues in applying the analytic-holistic thinking framework in consumer behavior, and questions regarding sample selection and composition.

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Consumer Response to Brand Extensions: Does Culture Matter?

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ABSTRACT

One of the most compelling findings from brand extension research is that consumers evaluate brand extensions on the basis of similarity or “fit” with the parent brand, with better fitting extensions receiving more favorable overall evaluations. The purpose of this paper is to assess whether this finding can be generalized to other cultures. We propose that cultural differences may exist based on recent cross-cultural research demonstrating that cultures have different styles of thinking, which could affect the way consumers judge brand extension fit. Two studies conducted with individuals from an Eastern culture (India) and Western culture (U.S.) support the existence of cultural differences in brand extension evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Research aimed at understanding how consumers respond to brand extensions has been an important area of inquiry in the past decade. A number of factors have been identified that influence whether consumers will evaluate brand extensions in a favorable manner. Key among them is the degree to which a brand extension “fits” with the parent brand, which consumers judge in a variety of ways, including whether the extension is in a product class similar to other products produced by the parent brand and whether an attribute associated with the parent brand could be beneficial in the extension product class. Brand extensions that fit well with the parent brand are usually evaluated quite favorably (for a review, see Keller 2002).

However, it is unclear whether these findings are applicable to consumers from other countries and cultures. Although comparative studies are lacking, there are preliminary indications that cross-cultural differences may exist. In a secondary analysis of eight studies conducted in the U.S. and abroad, Bottomley and Holden (2001) found that brand extension evaluations seemed to vary across cultures. They suggest that consumers from different cultures may place more or less emphasis on factors such as extension fit or product quality in arriving at their overall evaluation of brand extensions. Differences of this nature seem quite plausible given the variety of contexts in which culture has been found to influence consumer behavior, including brand positioning (Roth 1995), persuasion (Aaker and Maheshwaran 1997), and decision making (Briley, Morris, and Simonson 2000).

The purpose of this paper is to examine whether cross-cultural differences exist in consumer perceptions of brand extension fit and extension evaluation. Different cultures, with different orientations and ways of thinking, may well have different views of what constitutes “good fit” for brand extensions, thereby influencing brand extension evaluations as well. We explore this possibility by comparing consumers from a Western culture (U.S.) with ones from an Eastern culture (India). In two studies, we assess whether cross-cultural differences in brand extension evaluations exist and if these differences can be accounted for by cross-cultural differences in perceptions of brand extension fit.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

An emerging body of literature in cultural psychology offers several conceptual frameworks for predicting cross-cultural differ-

ences. In this paper, we focus on the most recent framework, proposed by Nisbett, Peng, Choi, and Norenzayan (2001). They argue that social differences between cultures promote certain cognitive processes more than others. Individuals in Eastern cultures, who are embedded in many social relations, have beliefs about focusing on the field and paying attention to relationships among objects. In this way, Eastern cultures promote holistic thinking, defined as “involving an orientation to the context or field as a whole, including attention to relationships between a focal object and the field, and a preference for explaining and predicting events on the basis of such relationships” (Nisbett et al. 2001, p. 293). In contrast, individuals in Western societies, who have relatively fewer social relations, have beliefs that the world is discrete and discontinuous and that an object’s behavior can be predicted using rules and properties (Nisbett et al. 2001). Western societies promote analytic thinking, which “involves a detachment of the object from its context, a tendency to focus on attributes of the object to assign it to categories, and a preference for using rules about the categories to explain and predict the objects behavior” (Nisbett et al. 2001, p. 293). A considerable body of research supports this view (e.g., Choi, Nisbett, and Smith 1997; Ji, Peng, and Nisbett 2000).

Cultural differences in styles of thinking may influence the way brand extensions are interpreted across cultures. Consider first the analytic style of thinking characteristic of Western societies. Analytic thinkers focus on the attributes of objects and on category-based induction to draw inferences and make judgments. This style of thinking is consistent with findings from current brand extension literature that (American) consumers judge brand extension fit on the basis of product class similarity (e.g., is the extension in a product category similar to those associated with the parent brand?) and attribute relevancy (e.g., is there an attribute associated with the parent brand that is relevant for the extension product category?). Brand extensions that stray too far from the types of products sold under the parent brand are typically deemed to be a “poor fit,” unless there is a redeeming attribute that ties the extension to the parent brand (e.g., “breath freshening” for Close-up mouthwash) or a prestige brand image that can be transferred to the extension (e.g., Rolex purses).

Now, consider the holistic style of thinking characteristic of Eastern societies. Holistic thinkers focus on relationships between objects and the field as well as relationships between objects (Masuda and Nisbett 2001). Because Easterners pay attention to the field, they may be able to identify other relationships between the parent brand and the extension. For instance, Easterners often focus on the situation rather than the focal object (Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan 1999), suggesting that they may be more able to use complementarity of use as a basis of fit. Easterners might pay more attention to the complementary usage relationships between brand extensions and products sold by the parent brand. They might also consider relationships between the extension and parent brand in terms of the overall reputation or feeling they have for the parent brand. These types of relationships are likely to result in judgments of better brand extension fit than would ordinarily be the case if product class similarity or attribute transfer were employed as the basis of fit. Although U.S. consumers may be able to generate similar relationships on occasion, we would expect them to be more prevalent for Easterners.

¹The authors wish to thank Raghunath Rao for his assistance in data collection for study 2.

Thus, we propose that individuals from Eastern cultures will perceive a higher degree of brand extension fit than consumers from Western cultures, especially for extensions that are relatively “far” from product categories associated with the parent brand. Brand extensions that are viewed as being rather far away from the domain of the parent brand could be viewed as a better fit if consumers were able to link them on a more holistic basis, which is a way of thinking more characteristic of Eastern consumers. This idea is consistent with findings from cross-cultural research that Easterners tend to perceive stronger relationships (covariation) among pairs of objects than do Westerners (Ji, Peng, and Nisbett 2000). Accordingly, we hypothesize:

H1: Easterners will perceive a higher degree of brand extension fit than Westerners, particularly for brand extensions deemed to be poor fitting by Western standards.

As a consequence of cultural differences in perceptions of brand extension fit, we would also expect to see concomitant differences in brand extension evaluations. If the relationship between brand extension fit and brand extension evaluation holds across cultures, we should observe more favorable brand extension evaluations from consumers from Eastern as opposed to Western cultures. Because consumers from Eastern cultures perceive a higher degree of brand extension fit in many situations, we predict:

H2: Easterners will evaluate brand extensions more favorably than Westerners, particularly for brand extensions deemed to be poor fitting by Western standards.

STUDY 1

Overview

Cultural differences in brand extension evaluations were tested by comparing a sample of consumers from the U.S. (Western culture) with one from India (Eastern culture) in a 2 (culture: Eastern, Western) \times 2 (extension fit level: low, moderate) \times 2 (extension replicate) mixed design. Culture was a between subject factor, with the remaining factors varied within subject. Two levels of extension fit were included to explore whether cultural differences might be more evident for low versus moderate fit extensions, with the level of fit calibrated on the U.S. sample to provide for a baseline of comparison. Two replicates were selected for each level of extension fit: low fit (Coke popcorn, McDonald’s chocolate bar) and moderate fit (Mercedes Benz watch, Kodak greeting cards). Thus, extension replicates were nested within extension fit levels.

Sample

Twenty-nine American subjects and thirty-five Indian subjects were recruited from the same university community. Indian students residing in the U.S. were selected to minimize differences between Indian and U.S. subjects that might provide an alternative explanation for findings of cultural differences, such as differences in brand familiarity, brand advertising exposure, and brand breadth. The ad specified that participants needed to be in the U.S. for less than three years to ensure that acculturation had not occurred to a marked degree.

Stimuli

Subjects saw four brand extensions: Coke popcorn, McDonald’s chocolate bar, Mercedes Benz watches, and Kodak greeting cards. These extensions were selected on the basis of two criteria. First, parent brands used in the study needed to be well known and familiar to subjects from both countries. We examined reports of the top brands in each country (Business Week’s Top 100

Brands, 2001; The A&M’s India’s top brands, 1999, 2001), explored websites for brands on both lists, and assessed familiarity in a small pretest with Indian respondents. Four brands were selected: Coke, Kodak, Mercedes Benz, and McDonald’s.

Second, we needed extensions for each of these parent brands that would be judged as low or moderate in fit by U.S. standards. For this purpose, we tested hypothetical extensions of selected brands with a sample of 28 U.S. students, similar to those included in the main study. Subjects judged the perceived fit of each brand extension on a seven-point scale for three items (inconsistent-consistent with the brand’s image, different from-similar to the brand’s image, not typical-of-untypical of the brand’s image), where higher numbers indicate a higher level of fit. The three items were summed to obtain an overall fit measure for each extension (α =.89, .85, .91, .91 for Coke popcorn, McDonald’s chocolate bar, Mercedes Benz watch, and Kodak greeting cards, respectively). Two brand extensions were rated below the scale midpoint ($M_{\text{Coke popcorn}}=2.17$; $M_{\text{McDonald’s chocolate bar}}=3.33$) and two were rated above the scale midpoint in perceived fit ($M_{\text{Mercedes Benz watch}}=4.11$; $M_{\text{Kodak greeting cards}}=5.61$). A Manova, with the four brand extensions as a within subjects factor and fit ratings as the dependent variable, indicated significant fit differences among brand extensions (*Wilks’* $\lambda=0.23$; $F(3,25)=27.88$; $p<.01$). A comparison of means indicated that Coke popcorn and McDonald’s chocolate bar were both significantly lower in fit than either Mercedes Benz watches and Kodak greeting cards (all p ’s<.05).

Procedure and Measures

Subjects were given a survey that asked for their opinions about “a number of new products and services that are being developed and may be available in your area in the future.” First, subjects were asked to give their opinions about the parent brands included in the study on a seven-point scale (1=poor and 7=excellent). Then, participants were shown the name of each brand extension and asked to give their evaluation of it on a seven-point scale (1=poor and 7=excellent). This was followed by an open-ended question about why they rated the brand extension in this manner (“Even though you have never tried this product, what went through your mind when you were deciding if it would be a good product or a bad product? What reasons came to mind in trying to decide what kind of product it would be?”). Next, subjects were asked to evaluate the fit of the brand extension with respect to the brand’s overall image on a scale ranging from 1 (“inconsistent with brand X’s image”) to 7 (“consistent with brand X’s image”), consistent with scales used in pretesting as well as prior brand extension research.²

Participants were then asked about their familiarity with the brands used in the study on a four-point scale (1=not at all familiar; 2=somewhat familiar; 3=familiar; 4=extremely familiar). Subjects were asked to list “whatever positive or negative things that come to your mind when you think about the brand.” Next, respondents completed a set of demographic questions about their nationality, number of years in the U.S., language spoken at home, and ethnicity of their mother and father. These questions were used to screen students from the U.S. sample who were of a different nationality or bicultural.

²One-item scales were used for measuring brand attitude, brand extension attitude, and brand extension fit to reduce respondent fatigue associated with competing a number of items for each measure for each brand extension. Prior brand extension research reports high inter-item correlations for multi-item scales, suggesting that single items can be appropriate measures of these constructs.

TABLE 1
Study 1: Means and Standard Deviations

Measure	Coke popcorn		McDonald's chocolate bar		Mercedes-Benz watch		Kodak greeting cards	
	U.S.	India	U.S.	India	U.S.	India	U.S.	India
Parent brand:								
Brand familiarity	3.90 (0.31)	3.89 (0.32)	3.86 (0.44)	3.63 (0.60)	3.10 (0.77)	3.03 (1.01)	3.52 (0.63)	3.63 (0.60)
Brand attitude	5.31 (1.58)	5.03 (1.62)	4.28 (1.75)	3.93 (1.60)	6.21 (1.29)	6.37 (1.14)	5.59 (1.05)	5.71 (0.89)
Brand extension:								
Extension fit	2.28 (1.83)	4.44 (1.56)	3.17 (1.89)	5.00 (1.50)	5.14 (1.68)	4.51 (2.16)	5.48 (1.43)	5.09 (2.02)
Extension evaluation	2.76 (1.84)	4.70 (1.30)	3.00 (1.62)	4.04 (1.49)	5.07 (1.75)	5.40 (1.48)	5.17 (1.31)	5.21 (1.62)

Note.- N=29 for U.S. and N=35 for Indian sample.

Results

Preliminary Analysis. First, we examined whether there were cultural differences in perceptions of or familiarity with parent brands that might provide an alternative explanation for cultural differences in brand extension responses. Parent brand attitude and familiarity did not vary by culture (see table 1 for means and standard deviations). A MANOVA with culture as the independent variable and parent brand attitude for all four brands as dependent variables revealed no significant effect of culture (*Wilks' λ*=0.97; $F(4,59)=0.45, p>.05$). This was corroborated by a univariate analysis of these data, finding that culture did not have a significant effect on brand attitudes for any of the four parent brands included in the study (all $p's>.05$). An analysis of brand familiarity yielded similar results. A MANOVA with culture as the independent variable and parent brand familiarity for all four brands as dependent variables revealed no significant effect of culture (*Wilks' λ*=0.93; $F(4,59)=1.12, p>.05$). A univariate analysis of these data also found culture to have no significant effect on brand familiarity for all four brands (all $p's>.05$).

We also examined whether different parent brand associations might be salient for the U.S. and Indian samples. Thoughts listed about each parent brand were coded into categories and a frequency count of brand associations for each parent brand by culture was obtained. The results point to very similar brand perceptions for all four parent brands. For McDonald's, the top two brand associations mentioned by both cultures were unhealthy and fast food/convenience. For Mercedes Benz, the top two brand associations for both cultures were good and luxury. For Kodak, the top three brand associations in both cultures were films, positive affect, and pictures. Minor differences were found for Coke, where the Indian sample mentioned positive affect, unhealthy and company-related thoughts as the most frequent brand associations, whereas Americans mentioned positive affect, Pepsi, and unhealthy as the most frequent associations.

Hypothesis Tests. Next, hypotheses pertaining to cross-cultural differences in perceptions of brand extension fit (H1) and brand extension evaluation (H2) were tested. Means and standard deviations for these measures for both cultures are provided in table 1.

A 2 (culture) x 2 (extension fit level) x 2 (extension replicate) MANOVA, with extension fit level and extension replicate (nested

within fit level) as repeated measures, revealed the existence of cultural differences in perceptions of *brand extension fit*. As expected, there was a significant effect of culture ($F(1,61)=7.20, p<.01$) and a significant culture x extension fit level interaction ($F(1,62)=25.46, p<.01$).³ Contrasts pertaining to this interaction indicated that cultural differences were evident for low fit extensions ($F(1,62)=33.49, p<.01$) but not for moderate fit extensions ($F(1,62)=1.77, p>.05$). Recalling that extension fit was calibrated on a U.S. sample, these findings support the hypothesis that consumers from Eastern (India) and Western (U.S.) societies perceive extension fit differently, with Easterners perceiving greater fit for extensions viewed as poor fitting from the vantage point of Western consumers.

To examine each brand extension replicate individually, a 2 (culture: Eastern, Western) x 4 (brand extension: Coke popcorn, McDonald's chocolate bar, Mercedes Benz watch, Kodak greeting cards) MANOVA, with brand extension as a repeated measure, was pursued. Note that the presence of a nested design in the previous analysis precluded an analysis of each individual brand extension. Findings from this analysis corroborate our earlier results. Examining univariate effects, the effect of culture on brand extension fit reaches significance for Coke popcorn ($F(1,61)=24.21, p<.01$) and McDonald's chocolate bar ($F(1,61)=17.98, p<.01$), with both brand extensions receiving higher fit ratings among Indians. Consistent with our prior analysis, there are no cultural differences for either Kodak greeting cards ($F(1,61)=0.97, p>.05$) or Mercedes Benz watches ($F(1,61)=1.35, p>.05$).⁴

³Findings not germane to our hypothesis tests were as follows. As expected, the main effect of extension fit level was significant ($F(1,62)=28.75, p<.01$), indicating that perceptions of brand extension fit were higher for extensions in the moderate as opposed to the low fit level. The culture x replicate (nested within extension fit level) interaction did not reach significance ($F<1$), indicating that individual extension replicates exhibited similar cultural differences. Finally, a covariate for gender effects did not reach significance ($t<1$).

⁴The multivariate tests indicated a significant main effect for culture (*Wilks' λ*=.64, $F(4,58)=8.27, p<.01$). A covariate for gender effects did not reach significance ($F<1$).

Similar findings were obtained for *brand extension evaluations*. A 2 (culture) x 2 (extension fit level) x 2 (extension replicate) MANOVA, with extension fit level and extension replicate (nested within fit level) as repeated measures, revealed the existence of cultural differences in brand extension evaluations. As expected, there was a significant effect of culture ($F(1,61)=13.49, p<.01$) and a significant culture x extension fit level interaction ($F(1,62)=7.48, p<.01$).⁵ Contrasts pertaining to this interaction indicated that cultural differences were evident for low fit extensions ($F(1,62)=21.86, p<.01$) but not for moderate fit extensions ($F(1,62)=.30, p>.05$). Recalling that extension fit was calibrated on a U.S. sample, these findings support the hypothesis that Eastern (India) and Western (U.S.) consumers evaluate brand extensions differently, with individuals from an Eastern culture providing more favorable evaluations for extensions considered to be poor fitting by Western standards.

To examine each brand extension replicate individually, a 2 (culture: Eastern, Western) x 4 (brand extension: Coke popcorn, McDonald's chocolate bar, Mercedes Benz watch, Kodak greeting cards) MANOVA, with brand extension as a repeated measure, was pursued. Findings from this analysis corroborate our earlier results. The effect of culture on brand extension evaluation reaches significance for Coke popcorn ($F(1,61)=22.67, p<.01$) and McDonald's chocolate bar ($F(1,61)=6.48, p<.05$), with higher evaluations given by Indian respondents. Once again, there is no effect of culture on evaluations of Kodak greeting cards ($F(1,61)=0.04, p>.05$) and Mercedes Benz watches ($F(1,61)=0.88, p>.05$).⁶

Discussion

Our results indicate that cultural differences exist in the way consumers evaluate brand extensions. Brand extensions judged to be a poor fit by U.S. respondents, such as Coke popcorn and McDonald's chocolate bars, were perceived much more positively by Indian respondents, which translated into more positive evaluations of these brand extensions. Brand extensions judged to be moderate in fit by U.S. standards, Mercedes Benz watches and Kodak greeting cards, did not exhibit cross-cultural differences of this nature.

These findings were corroborated by the types of thoughts that respondents generated for each brand extension. Cultural differences were evident for Coke popcorn and McDonald's chocolate bar, but less noticeable for Mercedes Benz watches and Kodak greeting cards. For Coke popcorn, Americans thought about it in terms of product class similarity, stating that a soft drink company making food did not make sense, as well as attribute/feature transfer, with many respondents imagining the extension as "Coke-flavored" popcorn. Indian respondents also expressed ideas about product class similarity, although they saw Coke and popcorn as similar because they were both "food." Indian subjects also related the extension to brand affect, noting that they would like the

extension because they liked Coke products, as well as complementarity, with mentions of Coke and popcorn being consumed together. For McDonald's chocolate bar, Americans thought about it in terms of product class similarity, noting that a fast food company wouldn't be able to make good chocolates, as well as the "low quality-cheap" brand concept they associate with the McDonald's brand. Once again, Indian respondents also thought about the extension in terms of product class similarity, but thought chocolate was consistent with McDonald's fast food, desserts, and treats. References to brand affect were even more frequent, with many Indian respondents noting the reputation of the McDonald's brand and their own liking for its products.

In sum, Americans used product class similarity and attribute/feature transfer as dominant modes of thinking, consistent with an analytical style of thinking. Indian respondents used some of the same bases as Americans, such as product class similarity, although they tended to see greater similarity and found ways to relate the parent brand and extension categories. However, Indians often used brand affect and complementarity as additional ways to think about brand extensions. Recall that these categories are consistent with a holistic style of thinking, involving general relationships between the extension and parent brand not tied to categories or attributes.

Overall, these results support the general hypothesis that brand extension evaluations are influenced by culture. Less clear is how extensive these cultural differences are in brand extension evaluations. Cultural differences were found for extensions judged as low fitting by U.S. standards, but no differences emerged for extensions judged to be moderate in fit. Perhaps we inadvertently dampened the level of cross-cultural differences by selecting a sample of Indian respondents residing in the U.S. Given this possibility, we conducted a second study to compare our U.S. sample with a new sample of Indian residents.

STUDY 2

Sample and Procedure

A sample of resident Indian consumers was compared to the sample of U.S. consumers collected in study 1. Twenty students were recruited for the Indian sample from a university in central India and paid \$3 for participating. All were fluent in English. Survey instructions and dependent measures were identical to study 1, with two minor exceptions. Indian participants filled out the survey in a group class setting to allow more students to participate and measures of parent brand associations were eliminated to shorten the survey.

Hypotheses regarding brand extension fit and evaluation were tested in a 2 (culture: Eastern, Western) x 2 (extension fit level: low, moderate) x 2 (extension replicate) mixed design.

Results

Preliminary Analysis. We examined whether there were cultural differences in perceptions of or familiarity with the parent brands that might provide an alternative explanation for cultural differences in brand extension evaluations. Parent brand attitudes and familiarity were similar across cultures, with the notable exception of McDonald's (see table 2 for means and standard deviations). A MANOVA with culture as the independent variable and parent brand attitude for all four brands as dependent variables showed a significant effect of culture ($Wilks' \lambda=0.81; F(4,44)=2.58, p=.05$), with univariate tests revealing a significant effect of culture on attitudes toward McDonald's ($F(1,47)=4.61, p<.05$) but no other brands (all $p's>.05$). Indian respondents had a more favorable attitude toward McDonald's than did Americans.

⁵Findings not germane to our hypothesis tests were as follows. As expected, the main effect of extension fit level was significant ($F(1,62)=44.26, p<.01$), indicating that brand extension evaluations were higher for extensions in the moderate as opposed to the low fit level. The culture x replicate (nested within extension fit level) interaction did not reach significance ($F(1,124)=2.5, p>.05$), indicating that individual extension replicates were subject to similar cultural differences. Finally, a covariate for gender effects did not reach significance ($t<1$).

⁶The multivariate tests indicated a significant effect of culture ($Wilks' \lambda=.69, F(4,58)=6.38, p<.01$). A covariate for gender effects did not reach significance ($F<1$).

TABLE 2
Study 2: Means and Standard Deviations

Measure	Coke popcorn		McDonald's chocolate bar		Mercedes-Benz watch		Kodak greeting cards	
	U.S.	India	U.S.	India	U.S.	India	U.S.	India
Parent brand:								
Brand familiarity	3.90 (0.31)	3.90 (0.31)	3.86 (0.44)	3.00 (1.12)	3.10 (0.77)	3.15 (1.04)	3.52 (0.63)	3.80 (0.41)
Brand attitude	5.31 (1.58)	5.05 (1.54)	4.28 (1.75)	5.20 (0.95)	6.20 (1.29)	6.60 (0.68)	5.58 (1.05)	5.35 (1.27)
Brand extension:								
Extension fit	2.28 (1.83)	4.10 (1.94)	3.17 (1.89)	5.10 (1.55)	5.14 (1.68)	5.80 (1.51)	5.48 (1.43)	5.05 (1.43)
Extension evaluation	2.76 (1.84)	4.20 (1.74)	3.00 (1.63)	4.75 (1.37)	5.07 (1.75)	5.95 (1.23)	5.17 (1.31)	5.20 (1.36)

Note.- N=29 for U.S. and N=20 for Indian sample.

The same pattern emerged for parent brand familiarity. A MANOVA with culture as the independent variable and parent brand familiarity for all four brands as dependent variables showed a significant effect of culture ($Wilks' \lambda=0.61$; $F(4,44)=7.04$, $p<.01$), with univariate tests revealing a significant effect of culture on familiarity with McDonald's ($F(1,47)=14.04$, $p<.01$) but not other brands (all $p's>.05$). Americans indicated higher familiarity with McDonald's. With these results in mind, parent brand attitude and familiarity were employed as covariates in subsequent hypothesis tests involving the McDonald's brand extension.

Hypothesis Tests. Next, hypotheses pertaining to cross-cultural differences in perceptions of brand extension fit (H1) and brand extension evaluation (H2) were tested. Means and standard deviations for these measures for both cultures are provided in table 2.

A 2 (culture) x 2 (extension fit level) x 2 (extension replicate) MANOVA, with extension fit level and extension replicate (nested within fit level) as repeated measures, revealed the existence of cultural differences in perceptions of *brand extension fit*. As expected, there was a significant effect of culture ($F(1,46)=13.33$, $p<.01$) and a significant culture x extension fit level interaction ($F(1,47)=9.34$, $p<.01$).⁷ Contrasts pertaining to this interaction indicated that cultural differences were evident for low fit extensions ($F(1,47)=17.94$, $p<.01$) but not for moderate fit extensions ($F(1,47)=0.12$, $p>.05$). Recalling that extension fit was calibrated on a U.S. sample, these findings support the hypothesis that consumers from Eastern (India) and Western (U.S.) societies perceive extension fit differently, with Easterners perceiving greater fit for extensions viewed as poor fitting from the vantage point of Western consumers.

⁷Findings not germane to our hypothesis tests were as follows. As expected, the main effect of extension fit level was significant ($F(1,47)=35.05$, $p<.01$), indicating that perceptions of brand extension fit were higher for extensions in the moderate as opposed to the low fit level. The culture x replicate (nested within extension fit level) interaction did not reach significance ($F(2,94)=1.80$, $p>.05$), indicating that individual extension replicates exhibited similar cultural differences. Finally, a covariate for gender effects did not reach significance ($t<1$).

To examine each brand extension replicate individually, a 2 (culture: Eastern, Western) x 4 (brand extension: Coke popcorn, McDonald's chocolate bar, Mercedes Benz watch, Kodak greeting cards) MANOVA, with brand extension as a repeated measure, was pursued. Note that the presence of a nested design in the previous analysis precluded an analysis of each individual brand extension. Findings from this analysis corroborate earlier results. Examining univariate effects, the effect of culture on brand extension fit reaches significance for Coke popcorn ($F(1,46)=11.23$, $p<.01$) and McDonald's chocolate bar ($F(1,46)=13.95$, $p<.01$), with both brand extensions receiving higher fit ratings among Indians. For McDonald's chocolate bar, culture remained significant even after covariates for McDonald's attitude and familiarity were entered into the analysis ($F(1,45)=5.42$, $p<.05$), with neither covariate attaining significance (both $p's>.05$). As before, there were no cultural differences for either Kodak greeting cards ($F(1,46)=0.78$, $p>.05$) or Mercedes Benz watches ($F(1,46)=1.37$, $p>.05$).⁸

Similar findings were obtained for *brand extension evaluations*. A 2 (culture) x 2 (extension fit level) x 2 (extension replicate) MANOVA, with extension fit level and extension replicate (nested within fit level) as repeated measures, revealed the existence of cultural differences in brand extension evaluations. As expected, there was a significant effect of culture ($F(1,46)=17.71$, $p<.01$) and a significant culture x extension fit level interaction ($F(1,47)=4.42$, $p<.05$).⁹ Contrasts pertaining to this interaction indicated that cultural differences were evident for low fit extensions ($F(1,47)=17.69$, $p<.01$) but not for moderate fit extensions

⁸The multivariate tests indicated a significant main effect for culture ($Wilks' \lambda=.63$, $F(4,43)=6.22$, $p<.01$). A covariate for gender effects did not reach significance ($F<1$).

⁹Findings not germane to our hypothesis tests were as follows. As expected, the main effect of extension fit level was significant ($F(1,47)=37.85$, $p<.01$), indicating that brand extension evaluations were higher for extensions in the moderate as opposed to the low fit level. The culture x replicate (nested within extension fit level) interaction did not reach significance ($F(2,94)=1.33$, $p>.05$), indicating that individual extension replicates were subject to similar cultural differences. Finally, a covariate for gender effects did not reach significance ($t<1$).

($F(1,47)=1.80, p>.05$). Recalling that extension fit was calibrated on a U.S. sample, these findings support the hypothesis that Eastern (India) and Western (U.S.) consumers evaluate brand extensions differently, with individuals from an Eastern culture providing more favorable evaluations for extensions considered to be poor fitting by Western standards.

To examine each brand extension replicate individually, a 2 (culture: Eastern, Western) x 4 (brand extension: Coke popcorn, McDonald's chocolate bar, Mercedes Benz watch, Kodak greeting cards) MANOVA, with brand extension as a repeated measure, was pursued. Findings from this analysis corroborate our earlier results. The effect of culture on brand extension evaluation reaches significance for Coke popcorn ($F(1,46)=7.66, p<.01$) and McDonald's chocolate bar ($F(1,46)=15.38, p<.01$), with higher evaluations given by Indian respondents. For McDonald's chocolate bar, culture remained significant even after covariates for McDonald's attitude and familiarity were entered into the analysis ($F(1,45)=5.86, p<.05$), with neither covariate attaining significance (both $p's>.05$). As before, there are no cultural differences for evaluations of Kodak greeting cards ($F(1,46)=0.01, p>.05$) and Mercedes Benz watches ($F(1,46)=2.89, p>.05$).¹⁰

Discussion

Our results are consistent with the first study in finding cultural differences in brand extension evaluations. As before, these differences were only evident in the case of brand extensions judged by U.S. standards as being a poor fit with the parent brand, Coke popcorn and McDonald's chocolate bar. Thus, similar cultural differences were observed with Indian samples from study 1 (U.S. residents) and study 2 (Indian residents).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Brand extension research has yielded a number of important insights. Among the most important is the finding that consumers evaluate brand extensions on the basis of the fit they perceive with the parent brand. Studies conducted in the United States consistently show that extensions are evaluated poorly if they are perceived as being a poor fit with the parent brand.

Our results indicate that culture is also an important factor in understanding how consumers evaluate brand extensions. Although consumers around the world consider fit when evaluating brand extensions, those from Eastern cultures judge brand extension fit differently than consumers from Western cultures on occasion. Easterners viewed even poorly fitting extensions (by U.S. norms) as at least moderate fits with the parent brand by finding different ways to relate the poor fitting extensions to the parent brand. Our results suggest that these differences may be due to cultural differences in styles of thinking. Westerners are analytic thinkers, who tend to judge brand extension fit primarily on the basis of product class similarity and transfer of individual attributes; Easterners are holistic thinkers, who judge brand extension fit on the basis of additional factors, such as brand reputation/affect and complementarity of use.

Thus, culture needs to be carefully considered before generalizing current findings to consumers in other countries. Prior research has yielded a number of important findings about how consumers evaluate brand extensions depending on the nature of the extension (e.g., poor vs. good fit, downward vs. upward stretch) and the parent brand (e.g., functional vs. concept oriented; broad vs.

narrow). These results have been explained in terms of cognitive processes that may not reflect how consumers from other cultures would process the same stimuli.

Further explorations could also provide much stronger evidence about the scope and nature of cross-cultural differences in responses to brand extensions. Additional research is warranted to better understand those situations where cultural differences exist (e.g., Coke popcorn) and do not exist (e.g., Kodak greeting cards). One possibility that we explored is that cultural differences will be stronger with extensions that are further away from the parent brand, which we referred to as "low fit" extensions. Another hypothesis is that cultural differences are weaker for extensions with parent brands that possess prestige brand concepts (e.g., Mercedes Benz) rather than functional brand concepts (e.g., Toyota).

Also warranted is further research to better understand the process that produces cross-cultural effects. In this study, we used the analytic-holistic thinking distinction to motivate a discussion of why brand extension responses may differ for Easterners versus Westerners. We provided some exploratory data in the form of thoughts that consumers generated about brand extensions, showing marked differences for extensions such as Coke popcorn and McDonald's chocolate bar. Additional research is necessary to provide strong evidence that differences in style of thinking are responsible for cultural differences in brand extension fit and evaluations. Although we were able to rule out parent brand attitudes and familiarity as factors, we did not rule out other sources of cultural differences that might contribute to the data patterns observed. To do so, studies are needed to pin down the process explanation, perhaps by priming different styles of thinking or comparing intact groups of consumers with different styles of thinking.

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¹⁰The multivariate tests indicated a significant effect of culture (Wilks' $\lambda=.65, F(4,43)=5.83, p<.01$). A covariate for gender effects did not reach significance ($F<1$).

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Exemplars or Beliefs? Implications of Representational Differences on Brand Evaluations Across Cultures

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In an era of increasing globalization, the importance of understanding how consumers across cultures characterize a brand cannot be overemphasized. Successful branding strategies in foreign markets require sufficient understanding of the impact of different types of brand associations in consumers' purchase decision in each culture. However, no research in the brand literature has tackled this issue. The question whether different types of brand associations are differentially accessible and important in different cultures remains unanswered. This paper proposes to fill this void in the literature.

Recent advances in the culture and cognition literature provide compelling evidence that easterners and westerners do not process information similarly. Nisbett et al (2001) argue that easterners process information holistically while westerners process information more analytically. Holistic processing involves paying greater attention to contextual information, as opposed to analytic processing, which focuses on the object itself.

Adapting from the findings in this stream of research, we propose that brand associations might not be similarly accessible in different cultures. Since the retrieval of exemplars, by definition, requires people to retrieve information about the context to which the exemplars are used in, easterners' chronic tendency to do so should increase the accessibility of exemplars in their mind. On the other hand, westerners' tendency to focus on the attributes of the object and to use rules to categorize things mean that brand beliefs should be more accessible in their mind.

To test this hypothesis, in study 1, subjects from Singapore and United States were shown a number of brands and asked to do a free association task and brand concept map. Findings from the study provided strong support for our hypothesis. We found that Singaporeans are more likely to list exemplars while Americans are more likely to list beliefs.

However, as study 1 used country as a proxy for culture, we were unable to identify the dimension of culture that was driving the results. Extant research suggests that self-view (independent self and interdependent self) could be one dimension that might explain the results. Various researchers have shown that self-view priming leads to the processing differences observed by Nisbett et al (2001) earlier (Kühnen et al, 2001, Kühnen and Oyserman, 2002). Thus, Study 2 had 2 objectives. First, we attempted to provide a more direct test of the impact of self-view on the accessibility of brand associations through the use of a priming technique. Two, study 2 also examined the impact of the different types of associations on consumers' brand attitude.

Consistent with Study 1, Study 2 showed that subjects primed with an independent self-view retrieved more beliefs or attributes about the brand while subjects primed with interdependent self-view retrieved more exemplars. More interestingly, the results also showed that not only did the number of exemplars retrieved differ between conditions; the types of exemplars retrieved also differed. Subjects in the independent prime condition retrieved more sub-category exemplars while subjects in the independent prime condition retrieved more specific exemplars. In addition, we also found that exemplars evaluation had a greater impact on category attitude for those in the interdependent prime condition while beliefs had a greater impact on category attitude for those in the independent

prime condition. This provided evidence that people with different self-views differ starkly in the information they consider in brand evaluation.

The notion that exemplars have differential impact on independents' and interdependents' brand attitude is intriguing. Study 3 extended the findings from Study 1 and 2 by focusing on the impact of exemplars on brand extension evaluation across cultures. Similar to Study 2, we primed subjects' independent or interdependent self so as to make that self-view temporarily more accessible. Next, we provided subjects with information about some products owned by a fictitious brand. The product information was manipulated such that one set of products had greater variance than the other. Both independent variables were between-subjects factors. The dependent variable was attitude towards an extended product. Results showed that interdependents rated the extended product more favorably when the new product could be used in the same usage occasion as the existing list of products. Independents rated the extended product more favorably when the new product belonged to the same taxonomic category as the existing list of products.

Thus, data from all three studies provided converging evidence that different types of representations are differentially accessible across cultures and this has important implications for brand attitude and brand extension evaluation.

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Cross-Cultural Differences in Brand Extension Evaluations: The Effect of Holistic and Analytical Processing

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Extant research suggests that consumers are likely to transfer their family brand attitudes to a new extension if the perceived fit between the parent brand's existing products and the extension is high (Aaker and Keller 1990; Boush and Loken 1991). When the perceived fit is high, consumers are likely to infer the quality of the extension as similar to the quality of the parent brand. On the other hand, when the perceived fit is low, the extension is less likely to be evaluated by the overall attitude toward the parent brand, because consumers fail to categorize the extension as similar to the parent brand and are likely to engage in attribute-based processing. However, these studies have been done exclusively in the U.S., and it is not clear whether consumers in different cultures evaluate brand extensions in the same way. Recently, Nisbett et al. (2001) suggest that Americans are more analytic, pay attention to attributes of the objects and use those attributes to categorize the objects, whereas East Asians are more holistic, are likely to attend not only to the attributes of the objects but also consider non-diagnostic contextual or background factors.

We extend the theory of holistic-analytical processing to the brand extension context. When the perceived fit is high, we expect evidence for analytic processing and no difference in brand extension evaluations across cultures. When the perceived fit is moderate or low, we expect that East Asians (versus Americans) are more likely to engage in holistic processing.

We employ two experiments to examine this possibility. Experiment 1 employs a 2 (culture: Western vs. Asian) X 3 (perceived fit: high, moderate vs. low) X 2 (brand breadth: broad vs. narrow) between subjects design. Korean and the U.S. represent cultures in which people incline toward holistic and analytic thoughts, respectively. The brand breadth factor is included to increase the generalizability of our findings as well as to rule out an alternative explanation. Since several big corporate names in Korea (e.g., Samsung, LG, etc.), it is possible to argue that Korean consumers are more familiar with broad brands and low fit extensions. Thus, we replicate our findings using both broad (Canon) and narrow (Nikon) brands. Our extension categories include a new digital camera (high fit), sunglasses (moderate fit) and running shoes (low fit). Our results suggest that both American and Korean consumers evaluate the high fit extension similarly. When the perceived fit is relatively low, Korean (vs. American) consumers evaluate the extension more favorably. These findings are consistent with our predictions and replicated across both broad and narrow brands. However, we did not find any difference between American and Korean consumers when the perceived fit was moderate. In order to explain this unexpected finding and to provide direct evidence regarding the processes underlying these effects, we conducted another experiment.

In experiment 1, we used two brands that consumers were highly familiar with and had prior knowledge about. In other words, we had little control over the non-diagnostic information. In experiment 2, we use a fictitious brand with which subjects do not have any pre-existing associations and we manipulate both diagnostic (e.g., perceived fit) and non-diagnostic information (e.g., characteristic of the CEO). Also, in order to provide direct evidence of holistic and analytic processing, we measure not only brand extension evaluations but also include a thought-listing task in experi-

ment 2. The study employs a 2 (culture: Western vs. East Asian) X 3 (perceived fit: high, moderate vs. low). Once again, Korean and the U.S. represent cultures in which people favor holistic and analytic thoughts, respectively. The fictitious brand (Zenet) was described as a leading brand in manufacturing high quality cameras and lenses. Our extension categories included digital cameras (high fit), sunglasses (moderate fit) and vacuum cleaners (low fit). All non-diagnostic information was negative in this study. Our results suggest that when the perceived fit (diagnostic information) between the parent brand and the extension is high, consumers in both Western and East Asian cultures evaluate the extension equally favorably. However, as the perceived fit decreases, consumers in East Asian cultures are likely to incorporate more non-diagnostic information (negative) and evaluate the extension less favorably than consumers in Western cultures. Consistent with our expectations, we found no difference between Korean and American consumers' extension evaluations when the perceived fit was high. Importantly, we also found that Koreans evaluated the extension less favorably than the Americans under both moderate and low fit conditions. Consistent with our expectations, the proportion of diagnostic thoughts was higher for Americans (vs. Koreans) under both moderate and low fit conditions.

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ROUNDTABLE

Is it Worth It? If So, Research It: Exploring the Place of Diversity Research in Marketing

Discussion Leaders:

Geraldine R. Henderson, Howard University

Carol M. Motley, Howard University

As we all know, Marketplace Diversity has become one of the most important pursuits in marketing practice as of late. Given the changing demographics of the U.S. in particular, and the world, in general, it is no surprise that profit-maximizing firms would seek to make themselves as attractive as possible to previously underrepresented global consumer segments (as defined by race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.).

Although it has not been our practice as marketing academics to concern ourselves with the currency of marketing practices, many have paused (individually and/or collectively) to wonder why multicultural research has not found a bigger place in the marketing literature. In this ACR Roundtable, it is our interest to understand why such research has not found a firmer footing in our field as it has in sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, and even marketing practice.

One of the primary issues to be discussed will be what marketing scholars think is “valid” or not—also known as “what’s the underlying construct?” Currently, there is no consensus on what some of these acceptable constructs and theories are that adequately account for observed marketplace diversity phenomena. Those who do research in this area need to talk about to make sure we are handling culture, race, ethnicity, gender constructs in rigorous ways and ensure that these have broader understanding, recognition, and application.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Context Effects in Choice

Alexander Chernev, Northwestern University

The importance of context effects has been underscored by numerous researchers in the field (Bettman, Luce, and Payne, 1998; Simonson and Tversky 1992). Building on the existing literature, this session investigates the impact of context on choice from three different theoretical perspectives.

The first presentation by Chernev examined how traditional context effects, such as extremeness aversion, are affected by the internal properties of choice alternatives. It was proposed that the compromise effect is not only a function of the relational properties of the choice alternatives but also depends on the proximity of the attribute ratings describing each of the alternatives. This proposition was tested in a context in which one of the choice alternatives was scale-equivalent, that is, it had equal values on both attributes. The data from two experiments showed that the presence of such alternatives can fundamentally change consumer evaluations of the extremeness of the options in the choice set.

The second presentation by Nowlis, Dhar, and Simonson examined the impact of context effects by focusing on the role of different types of tradeoffs that consumers must make when deciding how much of an item to buy. For example, consumers must often make tradeoffs between different levels of brand equity, price, flavor, size, and nutritional information. It was proposed that when consumers make multiple tradeoffs, the order in which these tradeoffs are considered can affect the overall amount that is chosen, due to differences in the manner in which different types of tradeoffs are resolved. In this context, it was argued that tradeoffs involving positive associations are likely to be resolved by purchasing several options whereas tradeoffs involving negative associations might lead to a lower purchase incidence.

The third presentation by Gershoff and Kivetz investigated the role of context effects in choice by examining how existing products may serve as the reference for fairness evaluation and choice of newer versions. The authors show that fairness perceptions and choice are highly sensitive to differences in common production methods: disabling alternatives (i.e., “versioning”), enhancing alternatives, or producing alternatives using different processes. Three studies demonstrated that the interaction between marginal costs and counterfactual thinking underlies the detrimental effect of versioning on fairness judgments and subsequent purchase behavior.

At the end of the session, Joel Huber led the discussion to integrate the individual presentations into a more general framework. He noted that the research presented defines three novel context effects that can be easily characterized: The first paper tells us that balance matters, the second that the agenda matters, and the third that the story matters. He further noted that these are all interesting and compelling context effects in their own right. The discussion underscored the importance of developing a broader perspective on the role of context effects to investigate the impact of the decision context on consumer choice.

“Context Effects without Context: Scale-Equivalence and Attribute Balance in Choice”

Alexander Chernev, Northwestern University

One of the major findings that have emerged from recent decision research is the presence of extremeness aversion in choice (Simonson and Tversky, 1992). The principle of extremeness aversion predicts that adding an adjacent nondominated alternative

will draw a larger share from the extreme than from the middle alternative. To illustrate, consider a set of two-dimensional alternatives $\{x, y, z\}$ such that y is between x and z (e.g., $x_1 < y_1 < z_1$ and $x_2 > y_2 > z_2$). The extremeness aversion principle predicts that because y has smaller advantages and disadvantages with respect to x and z , whereas both x and z have larger advantages and disadvantages with respect to each other, y will be preferred in the choice set $\{x, y, z\}$ relatively more than in either of the sets $\{x, y\}$ and $\{y, z\}$.

An implicit assumption of the extremeness aversion principle is that decision makers rely exclusively on the choice context to determine the extremity of each alternative, such that advantages and disadvantages of each alternative are defined relative to each other. In this context it is assumed that the middle option, defined such that its attribute values are between the values of the other alternatives, is always the option that becomes the compromise choice. The assumption that the middle option becomes the compromise is also very intuitive because the values of the middle alternative on each of the attributes lie between the values of the other, more extreme options.

Research presented in this article challenges the assumption that extremeness aversion is based only on the relational properties of the choice alternatives. It is argued that in certain cases individuals can use the available attribute ratings to construct reference points that are in turn used to evaluate the extremity of the choice alternatives. In this context, I propose that the middle option is not always the compromise alternative, and that in some cases one of the adjacent options can actually become the compromise. The viability of this proposition is tested by identifying a scenario in which individuals are likely to form a reference point that differs from the reference point implied by the relational properties of the alternatives. To illustrate this scenario, I introduce the notion of scale equivalence and discuss how the presence of scale-equivalent alternatives might affect extremeness aversion in choice.

Consider four alternatives, each described on two attributes as follows: A (50,70), B (60,60), C (70,50), and D (80,40), where the numbers in parentheses reflect an option's ratings on each of the two attributes. Note that option B has a unique property: it has equal values on both attributes. I refer to this option as the scale equivalent and argue that it can fundamentally change consumer evaluations of the extremeness of the options in the choice set.

How might scale equivalence of an option in the choice set affect consumer decisions? This research argues that scale equivalence is likely to make the adjacent option B a reference point in extremeness judgments and, as a result, this option will be perceived to be less extreme relative to the other alternatives in the set. This argument leads to the counterintuitive prediction that in the set BCD the compromise alternative is not option C, as predicted by prior research, but the scale-equivalent option B. Consequently, it is argued that adding option D to the set BC will not necessarily increase the share of option C because the latter might not be perceived as the compromise option.

Data from two studies document the impact of scale equivalence on extremeness aversion in choice. It is shown that scale equivalence of an alternative increases the likelihood of this alternative being perceived as the compromise option and subsequently being chosen by an extremeness-averse person. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses of consumers' rationale for selecting the compromise option suggest that the scale-equivalent alternative is

likely to become the compromise alternative due to the parity of its attribute ratings. In fact, the scale-equivalent alternative was commonly referred to as the middle option even when it was one of the adjacent alternatives in the set. Consumers also indicated that the selection of the scale-equivalent alternative is both easier to justify and less likely to be criticized.

The data offered by the second experiment provide insights into the boundary conditions of the scale equivalence effect, documenting its contingency upon individuals' information-processing strategy. In this context, the scale equivalence effect was found to be less pronounced in the context of a decision task designed to induce attribute-based processing of the available information. This finding offers a new perspective on the common assumption that, when evaluating an option's extremeness, consumers compare its values attribute-by-attribute across all alternatives. Contrary to that assumption, the data show not only that within-alternative attribute comparisons can occur, but also that the effects of these comparisons on extremeness aversion can be stronger in relative terms than the cross-alternative attribute comparisons. More generally, this finding suggests that the evaluation of an option's values on a given attribute can also be a function of how its scaling properties relate to the scaling properties of the other attributes describing the same option.

“The Effect of Tradeoff Resolution Order on Consumer Choice”

Stephen M. Nowlis, Arizona State University

Ravi Dhar, Yale University

Itamar Simonson, Stanford University

Consumer choice consists of brand, incidence, and purchase quantity decisions. In contrast to standard choice models, both brand choice and choice incidence have been shown to be influenced by the context (e.g., Nowlis and Simonson 1997; Dhar and Nowlis 1999). However, while there has been some prior research on how much is chosen (e.g., Wansink, Kent, and Hoch 1998), a question that is still unanswered in the literature is whether the purchase quantity decision will also be systematically influenced by the choice context. In this research, we focus on how the order in which attribute tradeoffs are resolved can impact the amount and variety of a product that is chosen. Since consumers typically consider incidence, brand choice, and purchase quantity decisions, the interaction between them is important to get a better understanding of consumer choice in the marketplace.

Prior work on brand choice and choice incidence has shown that decision conflict is an important variable in determining what is chosen and whether a choice is made. This research has found that increased conflict can result in the greater choice of a status quo option (Luce 1998) or an increased tendency to defer a choice (Dhar 1997). In our research, we build on this work to suggest another important consequence of decision conflict; namely, that it can also affect the amount that is chosen. In particular, we propose that as the decision becomes more difficult, consumers will resolve this difficulty by choosing a greater overall amount and greater variety. By spreading out the choice of options among several different product configurations, consumers can reduce the difficulty of the decision.

If the purchase quantity decision is affected by decision difficulty, this can have important consequences for decision making that occurs in stages. In particular, consumers often resolve attribute conflict in a specified sequence. For instance, a consumer in a store might see products organized by one type of attribute (e.g., brands), and then decide among different levels of that attribute before deciding on the next attribute (e.g., sizes). We propose that the order in which these tradeoffs are resolved will have a system-

atic effect on the amount that is chosen. In particular, if a more difficult attribute is faced in the first stage of a decision, we predict that the consumer will then choose more of this attribute than if an easier attribute were considered in the first stage of the decision. When more of an attribute is chosen in the first stage, this will translate into more chosen in the second stage as well. For instance, if a consumer decides among different brands before deciding among different sizes, that consumer might choose more than if the size decision preceded the brand decision.

We conducted a number of studies which support our framework and predictions. These studies manipulated the order in which tradeoffs were considered, and the types of tradeoffs that were required. Across the experiments, we find that when a more difficult attribute is encountered in the first stage rather than the second stage of the decision, more overall is chosen and more variety is chosen. Furthermore, this effect is mediated by the amount of conflict felt in the decision. We also show that when the conflict in an attribute decision is reduced, this eliminates the effect of order on amount chosen. Finally, we extend our results to situations involving negative tradeoffs, and examine the implications of our findings for the way in which products are organized on store shelves.

“The Psychology of Versioning: Context Effects and Counterfactual Thinking as Determinants of Fairness Perceptions and Choice”

Andrew D. Gershoff, Columbia University

Ran Kivetz, Columbia University

Firms often produce an assortment, or line, of different versions of their products to offer to consumers. For example, HP sells computer printers that print at 15, 19, and 25 pages per minute. There are a number of ways that firms can manufacture these different versions of their products (Shapiro and Varian 1998). First, firms may use entirely different production processes. Alternatively, firms may create different versions using largely the same processes by producing a base product and making adjustments to it. For example, firms may produce value-enhanced versions by taking an existing product and augmenting it in some way to make a new version of the product. Firms may also create value-subtracted versions by taking an existing product as a base and offering it as a new product with some of its features disabled. This method, labeled by Shapiro and Varian (1998) as “versioning,” is commonly used to produce different versions of software and often hardware. Note that while value-enhancing costs the firm more to produce a more preferred alternative, value-subtracting costs the firm more to produce a less preferred option. The present research proposes that consumer preference and perceptions of product alternatives will be systematically affected by the method employed to create the product version.

Prior research has shown that a consumers' willingness to pay for an alternative may be influenced by the perception of the fairness of the alternative's price (Campbell 1999; Kahneman, Knetsch and Thaler 1986). Consumer perception of price fairness is proposed to be governed by a rule of “dual entitlements” that suggests that buyers are entitled to a price and sellers are entitled to a profit (i.e., price minus marginal cost) associated with a reference transaction (Kahneman et al. 1986). Higher prices compared to the reference transaction are perceived as unfair if the firm's costs have not changed. However, when a firm's costs increase, a higher price is perceived as fair.

Recent research has suggested that consumers may use a number of potential reference transactions in their evaluation of fairness including past prices, competitors' prices, and vendor costs (Bolton, Warlop, and Alba 2003). We suggest that alternative

versions of a product offered by a firm will also serve as a reference, allowing consumers to use one version of the product to evaluate the fairness of the exchange for another version. For instance, an original version of the product may become the reference transaction against which the fairness of the exchange for a newer version can be judged. Further, using theory on counterfactual reasoning (e.g., Kahneman and Miller 1986) and fairness to develop hypotheses, it is proposed that compared to versions that are created by different processes and by value-enhancement, value-subtracted versions reduce (or even reverse) the perceived differences between the versions in terms of the marginal cost, effort, and time for the firm to produce. Thus, consumers will perceive the manufacturing process to be less fair and be willing to pay less for value-subtracted versions compared to identical alternatives that are described as being produced by different processes or value-enhancement.

Three completed studies test the robustness of the effects in terms of evaluation of products within a firm as well as choice of alternatives between firms. In study one, one hundred and seventy six respondents were provided with "Consumer Reports" information about identical computer printers that differed only in terms of pages printed per minute and a description of the manufacturing process. The descriptions were based on actual processes used in the industry. Depending on condition subjects were told either that the company added a computer chip to the slower printer to produce the faster printer (enabled condition), that the company added a chip to the faster printer to produce the slower printer (disabled or versioning condition), or that the two printers were made with different circuitry (different process condition). Respondents preferred the slower printer less, were willing to pay less for it, and rated the manufacturer as less fair in the disabled (versioning) compared to the enabled or different process conditions. No such difference was found for the faster printer.

Study two further investigated versioning effects in a choice setting as well as explored the asymmetry found in study one. Specifically, study two examined how perceptions of fairness depend on whether consumers are considering purchasing the base product from which a new version has been created or the new version that has been created from a base product. One hundred and forty six respondents participated in the between-subjects 3 (production method: different processes, enabling, disabling) X 2 (consumer perspective: considering the base vs. new product) design. In all conditions, respondents made a choice between two brands of printers that were both described by "Consumer Reports" as printing 15 pages per minute (X-15 and Y-15). Additional information described the "Brand X" manufacturing process as well as another "Brand X" printer that was not under consideration by the respondent. Depending upon condition, either the X-15 printer under consideration was a base for the other printer, the other printer was a base for X-15 printer, or the two were described as being independently produced. Additionally, the production method was described as either changing the circuitry to enable the printer to print faster (enabling condition), disable the printer so it prints slower (disabling or versioning condition), or using separate circuitry (different process condition). Results indicated an interaction between production method and consumer perspective. Choice share, preference, and ratings of fairness were lower for respondents considering an otherwise identical printer in the versioning condition when the printer was described as being the result of a disabled faster printer compared to being the base used to produce a disabled slower printer. No similar differences in choice share, preference, or ratings of fairness were found between printers in the enabling conditions.

Study three examined the key role of counterfactual reasoning and marginal costs in determining perceptions of fairness and subsequent purchase of versioned products. The results indicate that the violation of a basic principle—that lower quality products should cost less to produce—underlies the detrimental effects of versioning tactics. Further, when the relationship between quality and marginal cost is (counterintuitively) negative, consumers engage in increased counterfactual thinking, which mediates these effects. Additional studies are currently being conducted to further explore the underlying mechanisms and boundary conditions of the effect of versioning on perceived fairness and consumer choice.

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How Regulatory Focus Influences Consumer Evaluations, Judgments and Choices

Utpal M. Dholakia, Rice University

“Factors Determining the Persuasiveness of Promotion- and Prevention-focused Appeals”

Ginger L. Pennington, Jennifer L. Aaker, & Neal J. Roese

An increasing amount of empirical evidence points to the important role of consumers' underlying motivational states in shaping reactions to marketing stimuli. Advertisements and persuasive messages often convey “motivationally loaded” information that may encourage consumers to view a product or service in either approach or avoidance terms. For example, promotion-focused advertisements emphasize the attainment of optimal outcomes (such as getting a great deal), whereas prevention-focused messages emphasize safety from unwanted outcomes (such as paying too much). An important issue for marketers is to understand the conditions under which messages of each type are most likely to result in favorable consumer attitudes. The present research examines two factors that influence the effectiveness of promotion-versus prevention-framed messages: a consumer's temporal perspective and level of construal (i.e., emphasis on concrete versus abstract ways of thinking).

Recent findings (e.g., Pennington & Roese, *in press*) suggest that a promotion focus on potential gains tends to predominate when a goal lies in the distant future. As the time to goal realization nears, however, emphasis on promotion declines to a level on par with prevention concerns. The current research examines the implications of this process for consumer evaluation. In the first study, we examined whether the amount of time until a purchase would influence the persuasiveness of promotion and prevention-framed messages. Based on the previously observed temporal pattern of regulatory focus, we hypothesized that consumer attitudes towards persuasive messages would be most positive under conditions of “fit” between regulatory focus and temporal perspective (i.e., promotion-focused ads /distant purchases, and prevention-focused ads /proximal purchases).

In Study 1, participants imagined themselves in a purchasing situation (automobile purchase) that was described as distant (one month away) or proximal (2 days away). Participants were then presented with a promotion- or prevention-framed persuasive message. The promotion-framed message emphasized the presence of positive outcomes (e.g., “the satisfaction of getting a good deal”), whereas the prevention-framed message presented the same information but focused on the absence of negative outcomes (e.g., “the satisfaction of never paying too much”). As expected, the promotion-framed message resulted in higher purchase involvement and more favorable attitudes than the prevention-framed message for participants in the distant condition. When participants anticipated a more immediate purchase, however, the opposite pattern of preferences emerged. These results suggest ways in which managers might effectively target consumers at different stages in the purchasing process.

A factor closely intertwined with temporal perspective is the extent to which individuals construe events on an abstract versus concrete level. Recent work by Liberman, Trope, and others (e.g., Liberman et al., 1999), for example, has shown that increasing temporal distance broadens individuals' thinking, leading people to focus more on the ultimate meaning of an event as opposed to its concrete details. Given this correspondence between temporal perspective and cognitive construal, we hypothesized that cogni-

tive construal would serve as an important moderating factor in determining the persuasiveness of promotion- and prevention-focused appeals. A second study was designed to test whether consumer attitudes towards advertisements would be most positive under conditions of “fit” between regulatory focus and construal. Study 2 examined the hypothesis that promotion-focused messages would be most persuasive when framed at an abstract level (the type of thinking typically adopted for distant events), whereas prevention-focused messages would be most persuasive at a concrete, detail-oriented level (the type of thinking adopted for proximal events).

In Study 2, participants evaluated one of four types of advertisements for athletic shoes. The text of each message was altered to manipulate regulatory focus (promotion/prevention) and construal (abstract/concrete). The predicted interactive effect of regulatory focus and cognitive construal was confirmed for consumers' attitudes towards the brand, attitudes toward the advertisement, and behavioral intentions. Results indicate that this effect was driven primarily by the preference for low- versus high-level construal in the prevention-focus condition. Consistent with our hypotheses, consumers appear to react most favorably to detail-oriented product appeals when prevention or loss-avoidance goals are emphasized.

The results of this research emphasize the importance of regulatory focus in shaping consumer responses to persuasive messages and identify two key factors that moderate the influence of promotion and prevention-framed messages on consumer attitudes. Our results suggest that marketers should pay careful attention to emphasizing “fit” between regulatory focus, temporal framing, and cognitive construal when designing persuasive appeals.

“When Do Consumers Use Conceptual Versus Experiential Processing Heuristics?”

Rui Zhu & Joan Meyers-Levy

Existing literature suggests that there are at least two ways in which consumers may render product judgments when their processing motivation is limited. One means entails relying on common-sense implications associated with a salient conceptual cue. For example, research indicates that relatively unmotivated consumers often focus on conceptual cues consisting of salient consensual data (Maheswaran and Chaiken 1991), such as a summary statistic that reflects the general public's views about the focal issue (e.g., 70% of consumers prefer Coke). In such a case, they generally base their judgments on the perceived favorableness of this conceptual cue (e.g., they simply reason that if 70% of consumers prefer this brand, it must be good). We refer to these sorts of salient logic-based cues that can serve such a heuristic purpose as conceptual heuristic cues.

A second far less investigated means of judgment formation entails relying on individuals' internal, experiential sensations that they happen to feel at the time of judgment formation (e.g., Meyers-Levy and Malaviya 1999). Here, individuals base their judgments on nonsemantic, subjective body sensations that they may experience upon exposure to some data. This occurs frequently because they (mis)attribute the sensation to the appeal of the focal issue or object. For example, exposure to a product message that contains pictures of highly attractive people may induce the consumer to experience spontaneously a very positive visceral sensation. This

sensation, then, may be misattributed to the actual attributes of the target object, prompting the individual to ascribe a highly favorable judgment to the product. We refer to the data that engenders such experiential sensations as experiential cues.

Using regulatory focus theory as the conceptual framework, the current research explores whether these two mechanisms are indeed distinct and aims to identify moderating factors. A growing stream of empirical studies suggests that people's regulatory focus influences their strategic inclinations, including their risk preferences. For example, Crowe and Higgins (1997) showed that individuals with a promotion focus apparently experienced a visceral state of eagerness or zeal, which caused them to use relatively risky strategies. In contrast, individuals with a prevention focus appeared to be cool-headed, vigilant and possibly conceptually focused, which prompted them to employ conservative strategies. Yet another instance of support is offered in the research of Meyers-Levy and Peracchio (1996). They found that individuals who focused on positive outcomes, responded in a similar manner as did those who by disposition tended to rely on their experiential sensations. By contrast, individuals who focused on negative outcomes, responded in a like manner as did those who by disposition relied on more rational, conceptual material.

The preceding findings suggest the possibility that promotion and prevention focus individuals may be differentially sensitive to experiential data versus conceptual information. Specifically, we hypothesize that under fairly low motivation conditions, individuals who adopt a promotion (prevention) focus will be more sensitive to and base their judgments on the implications of experiential (conceptual) cues versus conceptual (experiential) cues.

To test the proposed thesis, the following study was conducted. First, to limit processing motivation, participants took part in a computer survey in large groups and were informed that they could leave as soon as they finished the study. Next, participants performed an initial task intended to manipulate their adoption of either a promotion or prevention focus. Following this, participants were shown several ads. The target ad touted a new brand of athletic shoes. The target ad displayed a salient headline, a clear picture of the shoes, several claims about the shoes' features, and pictures of a number of people who presumably used the shoe, each annotated by a quote that extolled a shoe benefit. Both a conceptual and an experiential heuristic cue were represented in the ad, which were otherwise identical. Specifically, these two types of cues varied in favorableness orthogonally such that when the conceptual (experiential) cue was positive, the experiential (conceptual) cue was negative. The ad headline presented the conceptual heuristic cue. In the positive conceptual cue condition, it stated that in tests, 7 out of 10 consumers preferred the target brand of shoe. In the relatively negative conceptual cue condition, this statistic was 5 out of 10. The experiential cue came in the form of the pictures of the presumed users of the shoe. The favorableness of this cue was manipulated by varying the visual attractiveness of the users. Either they looked like the type of attractive people typically displayed in ads (e.g., well groomed and fit) or they appeared more average looking and realistic (e.g., less perfect facial and body appearance). Next, participants were administered judgment as well thought-listing measures. Finally, they completed an individual difference scale on private self-consciousness (Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss 1975), which assessed the extent to which one attended to his or her inner feelings or sensations. We anticipated that the aforementioned predictions might only occur for participants who, by disposition, are relatively high versus low in private self-consciousness.

Consistent with our theorizing, findings revealed that promotion focus individuals based their judgments on the favorableness of the

experiential cue and judged the target product more favorably when this cue was more favorable (and the conceptual cue was relatively unfavorable), whereas prevention focus individuals based their product evaluations on the favorableness of the conceptual cue, producing more favorable judgments when that cue was more favorable (and the experiential cue was relatively unfavorable). Moreover, such effects only occurred for participants who were chronically high versus low in private self-consciousness.

“Sequent Impulsive Choices Within a Consumption Episode: The Role of Regulatory Focus”

Utpal M. Dholakia and Richard P. Bagozzi

Trips to the mall or the supermarket are examples of *consumption episodes*, in which consumers make many purchase or consumption decisions within a short and contiguous window of time (Dhar and Simonson 1999). *Sequent choices* in such consumption episodes, i.e., choices made soon *after* one or more prior choices, have generally been studied by researchers using a *cognitive lens*. For instance, a large body of research on context effects shows that information processed during prior choices influences such aspects of a sequent choice as which attributes are used, how they are weighted, and which alternative is chosen by consumers (e.g., Dhar and Simonson 1999; Simonson and Tversky 1992).

But such choices are also influenced by the consumer's motivational state. For instance, when many tempting products and offers are encountered by the consumer one after the other during a shopping trip, choices to purchase or not purchase may often times be impulsive in that they are made without any prior planning, springing instead from a sudden and intense desire to act (Baumeister 2002; Rook 1987). In this paper, our interest is in studying how sequent impulsive choices are influenced by prior impulsive choices within a consumption episode, from a motivational perspective.

In contrast to research on cognitive contextual influences, we argue that independent of the attributes or strategies of prior choice, *the motivational state of the consumer* is influenced through the process of engaging in the prior choice within a consumption episode, and this in turn, can influence how sequent choices are made afterward. Specifically, we hypothesize that participating in a prior impulsive choice will mitigate the impulsivity of choice in the sequent task within a consumption episode. We call this the *sequent mitigation effect*, and argue later on that the basis of its influence is motivational, in that it occurs because the sequent choice task *musters a lower level of desire on account of having participated in a previous impulsive choice beforehand*. In Experiment One, we provide evidence of this effect by showing that participants responding to an impulsive choice scenario choose significantly less impulsively when it is presented *after a prior impulsive choice scenario* relative to when it is presented first.

Further, in seeking to understand possible mechanisms underlying this effect, we consider the role of the consumer's regulatory focus as a moderator. We hypothesize that a promotion focus should maintain the consumer's desire to choose impulsively in the sequent choice, whereas a prevention focus should reduce the consumer's desire in the sequent choice. Our emphases in this research is on those aspects of the two regulatory foci that influence the experience of desires. Emerging research shows that under a promotion focus, the individual's strategic inclination is to *approach matches to desired end-states*. Such individuals are therefore more eager to avoid *errors of omission* (i.e., missing an emerging opportunity for accomplishment), resulting in a reflexive inclination to act. In contrast, a prevention focus fosters a tendency to *avoid mismatches to undesired end-states*, with an orientation toward maintaining the status quo. Such individuals prefer cogni-

tive or behavioral courses that avoid *errors of commission* (i.e., making a mistake from acting rashly). Several studies support these differences (e.g., Crowe and Higgins 1997; Liberman et al. 1999).

These findings all provide support for our reasoning that the orientation of open-mindedness, the preference for change and risk-seeking all fostered by the promotion focus, should be conducive to triggering desire again in the sequent impulsive choice, even after having participated in a prior choice. In contrast, an orientation of risk-aversion, the preference for stability and caution supported by the prevention focus, should lead to a reduced desire in the sequent choice task. As a result, those with a promotion focus should show little or no mitigation of impulsivity, whereas those with a prevention focus should show a marked mitigation, in the sequent choice task.

We consider both, dispositional and situational aspects of regulatory focus, studying its role as a situational variable in Experiment Two, and as a dispositional characteristic in Experiment Three. In Experiment Two, we tested these hypotheses by temporarily increasing the accessibility of regulatory focus among our participants through emphasizing either potential gains or potential losses. In Experiment Three, where participants were shoppers in malls in six US cities, we conducted the study through self-administered computer kiosks used for commercial marketing research. In this case, we measured the participants' regulatory focus through the elicitation of their chronic sensitivities to positive and negative outcomes.

In all three Experiments, our hypotheses were generally supported. Interestingly, we also found that the first choice of participants responding to both choices did not significantly influence impulsivity of second choice, ruling out a strictly cognitive explanation for our results. We wish to present the results of these three experiments at ACR.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The Positive and Negative Consequences of Materialism: What Are They and When Do They Occur?

Marsha Richins, University of Missouri

SESSION OVERVIEW

This session explored how materialism, defined as the value placed on material wealth and possessions, results in poor outcomes for the individual, and why, nonetheless, this value persists. In the first paper, Shaw et al. developed and tested a model based on judgment theory to explain how materialism results in reduced life satisfaction and emotional well-being. According to judgment theory, the gap between an individual's current standard of living and his or her reference standards may be presumed to have a direct effect on satisfaction with standard of living. However, little research has sought to determine whether individuals readjust their expectations for standard of living over time or how this process is influenced by materialism. In the second paper, Wang and Wallendorf sought to test how materialism affects the re-setting of product expectations and other reference standards, thus influencing the duration of satisfaction with purchases. The third paper (Bhojwani and Frost) examined how culture may moderate the effect of materialism on compulsive behaviors, including hoarding.

This session provided an interdisciplinary forum for the evaluation of materialism's outcomes. The authors included scholars from fields such as marketing, communications, pharmacy, and psychology. The target audience included researchers interested in materialism and its consequences; those working on macro-level issues; those interested in values, consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, consumer culture, and cross-cultural issues; and those interested in consumer behavior's broader consequences.

Taken together, the results of these papers provide the foundation for a discussion of recurring puzzles, such as how and when materialism persists in individuals and in societies despite many negative physical, emotional, consumption, and social outcomes. O'Guinn has suggested that the paradoxical persistence of materialism is due in no small part to the construct itself being a product of modernist critiques of market capitalism. Stepping outside of that 150-year old perspective may allow us to better understand why materialism is much more than the problematized "*-ism*" of the therapeutic ethos.

"The Effect of Materialism on Emotional Well-Being and Life Satisfaction: An Application of Multiple Discrepancies Theory"

James W. Shaw, Ada Leung, and Melanie Wallendorf, The University of Arizona

Materialism has been defined as an orientation that reflects the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. Belk (1985) and others have suggested that it is a manifestation of psychological traits such as envy, non-generosity, and possessiveness. However, Richins and Dawson (1992) have argued that materialism is better characterized as a value that guides people's choices and conduct in a variety of situations. According to these researchers, it is the value that an individual places on the acquisition and possession of material goods. Most recent studies, in addition to this work, have adopted the value concept of materialism over earlier trait-based concepts.

According to Belk (1984, 1985), the three traits that best characterize materialism (i.e., envy, possessiveness, and non-generosity) bear weak to moderate negative correlations with happiness and life satisfaction. Others using Belk's definition have

reported materialism to be negatively correlated with material satisfaction (Dawson 1988) and positively correlated with social anxiety (Schroeder and Dugal 1995) and measures of depression (Wachtel and Blatt 1990). Studies that have treated materialism as a value as opposed to a negative trait (e.g., Richins 1987; Richins and Dawson 1992) have generally yielded similar findings.

Most researchers have reported a direct empirical relationship between materialism and subjective well-being. However, a direct association seems theoretically implausible if one defines materialism as a value instead of a trait. Guided by the work of Michalos (1985, 1991), a model was developed using multiple discrepancies theory (MDT) to explain why materialistic individuals report high levels of depression and anxiety as well as dissatisfaction with life. Consistent with the concept of vertical spillover, this theory posits that material well-being (i.e., an individual's happiness or satisfaction with his or her standard of living) has direct effects on life satisfaction and emotional well-being. Material well-being is influenced by the individual's evaluation of his or her perceived standard of living against set aspirations. These aspirations, in turn, are a function of evaluations of perceived standard of living against social referents and perceived needs. It is argued that materialists evaluate their standard of living poorly due to unreasonably high goals and expectations. This leads to reduced material well-being, which exerts negative effects on emotional well-being and life satisfaction.

A cross-sectional survey was conducted to collect data to test the model. Ninety students enrolled in an undergraduate marketing class at The University of Arizona administered a questionnaire battery to a quota sample of community respondents living in Tucson, Arizona. The sample was stratified by sex (male, female), age (21-40, 41-65), and social class (working, middle, upper middle).

The measures included in the questionnaire were selected or developed after a careful review of the extant literature. Materialism was assessed using Richins and Dawson's (1992) Material Values Scale. Emotional well-being was measured using the 18-item RAND Mental Health Inventory (Veit and Ware 1983). Life satisfaction was assessed using the five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al. 1985). A suitable measure of material well-being could not be found in the literature. Ergo, a new measure (the Material Well-Being scale) was constructed to assess positive affect, negative affect, and satisfaction related to standard of living. Perceived discrepancies between current standard of living and eight reference standards were assessed using modified versions of items employed by Michalos (1985, 1991) in validating MDT. Social support and self-esteem, which were treated as mediators in the model, were measured using the six-item Social Support Survey (Sarason et al. 1987) and four items from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), respectively.

A total of 737 questionnaires were completed, of which 405 (55%) were checked for data integrity. The structural model was tested using a generalized method of moments instrumental variables estimator. Materialism, material well-being, emotional well-being, life satisfaction, social support, and self-esteem were treated as latent variables. The variables were centered prior to estimation to reduce multicollinearity and to facilitate the interpretation of the coefficients.

The quota sampling approach appeared to work as expected. The mean (SD) age of respondents was 38 (12.4) years, and 55.8% of the sample was <41 years of age. Females comprised 51.4% of the sample. The distribution of respondents among social classes was fairly even, with 28.2% working class, 33.4% middle class, and 38.4% upper middle class. The Material Well-Being scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha of 0.90) and bore expected correlations with materialism ($r=-0.39, p<0.001$), emotional well-being ($r=0.50, p<0.001$), and life satisfaction ($r=0.59, p<0.001$).

Materialism was found to be negatively related to evaluations of standard of living against social references and perceived needs. These evaluations were positively related to material well-being. Material well-being was positively related to emotional well-being and life satisfaction, and the latter two constructs were also positively correlated. However, there continued to be a negative association between materialism and global measures of quality of life even after controlling for a direct relationship with material well-being.

While most of the model's hypothesized associations were validated, the results of this investigation suggest that MDT does not fully explain the relationship between materialism and global measures of quality of life. The authors' findings suggest that other theories, such as value conflict, should be used to supplement judgment theory when attempting to explain the materialism/quality-of-life relationship.

"The Influence of Materialism on Product Satisfaction"

Jianfeng Wang and Melanie Wallendorf, The University of Arizona

In the past two decades, materialism has become a widely-studied concept in the marketing field (e.g., Belk 1985; Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2002; Richins and Dawson 1992). Materialism has been connected to many constructs both as causes and as consequences (e.g., Fournier and Richins 1991; Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Denton 1997; Sirgy 1998). In the consumer research realm, materialism has been defined as a personality trait (Belk 1985) or a value (Richins and Dawson 1992). The present paper treats materialism as a value and proposes that materialism impacts consumers' reasoning in evaluating their purchases, and thus impacts their post purchase satisfaction.

Consumer satisfaction has been defined as "the consumer's fulfillment response" (Oliver 1996, p. 13). A dominant theory of consumer satisfaction is expectancy disconfirmation (e.g., Oliver 1980; Oliver and DeSarbo 1988), which states that consumers' satisfaction/dissatisfaction is judged by whether the actual performance is better/worse than their a priori expectations (Oliver 1980). Spreng, MacKenzie, and Olshavsky (1996) argue that, in addition to expectations of products prior to purchase, the extent to which a person's desires are fulfilled by products is also important in evaluating satisfaction. It implies that satisfaction is not simply the result of comparisons of attributes or effects of ongoing emotions, but may also involve persistent individual values (e.g., materialism). The current paper integrates materialism, a crucial individual value, into the consumer satisfaction process in order to see its effects on consumer satisfaction over time. More specifically, we examine the extent to which materialism influences the duration of product satisfaction.

It has been suggested that although acquisitions enhance individuals' satisfaction temporarily, the pleasure derived from such improvements may wane quickly such that one's satisfaction reverts to its previous level (Richins and Rudmin 1994). Materialistic individuals have been found to have lower levels of satisfaction

with their lives in general and with their standard of living in particular (Richins 1987, Sirgy 1998). It is hypothesized in the current paper that consumers' satisfaction with purchased possessions wanes more quickly as materialism increases. It is not because they are dissatisfied in the beginning (right after the purchase), but because they have high (unrealistic) desires and thus expect more from the products. That is to say, high levels of materialism lead consumers to keep searching for products to bring them happiness and manifest their success. However, It becomes difficult for such consumers to remain satisfied with products over the long term due to their consciousness and awareness of the "better" ones that can optimally manifest their success and prestige.

Two hypotheses are proposed in this article. For products whose public meaning highly represents social and financial status, high-materialistic consumers' satisfaction with formerly purchased products should be significantly lower than that of low-materialistic consumers. However, the satisfaction difference should not be significant for recently purchased products. On the other hand, for products whose public meaning hardly represents social and financial status, there should be no significant difference between high-materialistic and low-materialistic consumers' satisfaction with either recently purchased or formerly purchased products.

A pretest was first conducted to find out what product categories should be used for this study. 54 undergraduate students were asked to evaluate to what extent the given 14 product classes have the ability to form impression of owners, tell owner's discretionary income, and show owner's social status. From the results of this 7-point scale, sunglasses ($M=5.14, SD=1.24$) and jeans ($M=4.60, SD=1.34$) are selected as "high status" product categories and sweatshirt ($M=2.81, SD=1.21$) is chosen as "low status" product category.

The *material values scale* developed by Richins and Dawson (1992) is selected for the current research. In the consumer behavior context, Richins and Dawson's (1992) definition of materialism (i.e., a life value) is more applicable than Belk's (1985) one in that materialism can be viewed as a value that consumers place on their acquisition and possession of material objects (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2002). Oliver's (1980, 1996) universal product/service consumption satisfaction scale is used in the current research due to its high reliability and applicability to various product categories.

The study consists of 211 undergraduate students who did not participate in the pretest. For the product categories with high-status signaling capabilities (i.e., sunglasses and jeans), materialism has a marginally negative relationship with product satisfaction ($\beta=-.065, p<.07$). More interestingly, the interaction of materialism and duration of possession has a significant impact on product satisfaction ($\beta=-.261, p<.01$). The interaction of materialism and standardized price also has a significant impact on product satisfaction, but in a different direction ($\beta=.136, p<.01$). The interaction effects demonstrate that the (moderately) negative relationship between materialism and product satisfaction is amplified by longer the possessions or by lower the price paid. In contrast, for the low-status product category (i.e., sweatshirts), only the interaction of materialism and duration of possessions has a significant impact on product satisfaction ($\beta=-.170, p<.01$).

The results clearly manifest different patterns of satisfaction with high-status versus low-status product categories. Product meanings derived from high-status products may share differently with consumers of different materialistic beliefs. In comparison, low-status products' satisfaction may mostly come from utilitarian values that are evaluated similarly by consumers across materialistic measures.

“The Relationship of Materialism to Compulsive Hoarding and Indecisiveness in Indian and American College Students”

Kaamna R. Bhojwani, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Randy O. Frost, Smith College

Research on the construct of materialism has increased substantially in the last decade (Graham 1999). Much of this research has focused on two conceptualizations, the first by Belk (1985a, 1985b) and the second by Richins and Dawson (1992). Belk (1985a) views materialism as an object-oriented construct in which possessions are considered as a means to self-enhancement. According to Belk, materialism manifests itself in three traits: possessiveness, nongenerosity, and envy. He defines possessiveness as “the inclination and tendency to retain control or ownership of one’s possessions” (Belk 1985a, p. 291). Nongenerosity refers to “an unwillingness to give possessions to or share them with others” (Belk 1985a, p.291), while envy is “an interpersonal attitude involving displeasure and ill will at the superiority of (another person) in happiness, success, reputation or possession of anything desirable” (pg. 292). The Belk Materialism Scale was developed to measure these dimensions and is arguably the most widely used measure for that purpose (Ger and Belk 1990).

In contrast, Richins and Dawson (1992) define materialism as an organizing, central value leading to value orientations of three types: acquisition centrality, acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, and possession-defined success. Acquisition centrality occurs when people place possessions and their acquisition at the center of their lives. Acquisition as the pursuit of happiness suggests that acquisition is carried out for pleasure or self-satisfaction. Richins and Dawson (1992) explain that individuals are always in the pursuit of happiness. The pursuit of happiness by way of acquisition rather than any other means constitutes this aspect of materialism. Finally, possession-defined success refers to the tendency to judge one’s own and others’ success in terms of the quality of possessions had.

In order to understand the nature of materialism, the investigators sought to explore its relationship with another construct that also has the possession and acquisition of goods at its center. Compulsive hoarding, the acquisition of and failure to discard possessions that appear to be useless or of limited value (Frost and Gross 1993), has been found to be a significant subtype of obsessive-compulsive disorder in the United States (Leckman et al. 1997).

Several studies suggest that materialism exists throughout the world and that it is related to life satisfaction and general well-being (Dawson and Bamossy 1991; Keng et al. 2000; La Barbera and Gurhan 1997; Richins and Dawson 1992; Swinyard et al. 2001). However, the measurement of the construct of materialism in different countries has posed a problem. Similarly, few studies of hoarding behavior exist outside of the United States. This study sought to explore the relationship between materialism and compulsive hoarding in the United States and India, two large consumer societies. A construct related to hoarding, indecisiveness, was also studied in relation to materialism

Two hundred one college students from India and 130 from the United States completed the Belk Materialism Scale (Ger and Belk 1996), the Savings Inventory-Revised (SI-R; Frost et al. 2002), and the Frost Indecisiveness Scale (FIS; Frost and Shows 1993). The Materialism Scale had low to moderate reliability in both samples (alphas ranging from 0.57–0.65). The SI-R and its four subscales—clutter, difficulty discarding, acquisition problems, and interference—as well as the FIS were internally consistent in both samples (alphas ranging from 0.50 to 0.89). All scale scores were standard-

ized to reduce multicollinearity. An interaction term was created by multiplying the overall materialism score by nationality (dummy coded) to determine whether the relationship of materialism with hoarding and indecisiveness varied by culture. The authors elected not to include nationality as a main effect in their regression models since they were unsure that the absolute numbers would mean the same thing in India as in the United States. The poor reliability of the materialism scale reinforced this.

Regression analysis revealed significant associations of materialism with the hoarding scale and its four subscales as well as with indecisiveness. There were, however, no significant interactions, indicating that the relationship did not vary by country. These findings suggest that materialism in India relates to important constructs in the same way that it does in the United States. Further research on the development of a more reliable materialism scale as well as its relationship to other constructs in India is warranted.

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DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS

Hail, Hail Materialism

Thomas C. O'Guinn, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Let me start by saying that these are very good papers. They are careful, well thought out, and beautifully executed. As both sets of authors have noted, the philosophical traditions of materialism are long, complex and varied. The data do not fit ideologue's swollen form so smartly.

Having said that let me introduce some fairly heretical thought.

Suppose there is no such thing as materialism. By this, I mean that it is merely another -ism, socially constructed in the fine modernist tradition of the therapeutic ethos (Jackson Lears 1983, Marchand 1985). As such, it cannot meaningfully be separated from the traditional (meta-mantra) critique of modernity and market capitalism. It is the inevitable by-product of that discourse...and outside of that very particular discourse it is historically something different. As Michael Schudson (1984) so famously pointed out, there has never been a society that did not possess luxuries, or where things were just things. The entire human record consists of no place where materiality and luxury are absent. Such a place, such a time, are fictions. Tales of modernity's creation of materialism are a-historical and fictitious, but the flavor and nature of the critique itself is peculiar to modernity.

But is it not true that the modern marketplace, particularly branded objects, have brought materiality more to the center of society and culture? The answer appears to be, yes. Then, can we not discuss materialism in a meaningful way without running afoul of history? I think so, and I think these authors do that, but I still caution others.

So, just how meaningful is materialism, then? Should we care? How concerned should we be? Is this just an individual difference variable, normally distributed throughout contemporary society? Or, is it something much larger, something more endemic? Well, I believe it to be both, but the latter to be much more interesting. It is the historical trend, the epoch-flavored phenomenon, and the historically situated dynamics that really matter, at least to me. Of course, the really interesting questions are the political ones: who cares, how much do they care, and why do they care? That last one might actually keep you up at night.

Who benefits most from the charge and invocation of "materialism"? Given that all utterances are at some level political, there are beneficiaries to creating and sustaining -isms. I believe that we find our answer in those who have over time most often warned us about liking things too much, and jealously guarded adoration in general. Over the human record, it has most often been gods and kings who objected to materialism.. Gods and other rulers have historically guarded who and what one could worship. If one is to put no god before the real god, then the real god would have to be a jealous god...offering strict sanctions for the worship of things. Kings, by the way, are the same. They have historically preached against the people placing too much emphasis on things so as not to divert proper attention from just who should be worshipped and adored. This is Social Control 101. In American culture this institutional control is also deeply intertwined with our puritanical asceticism and guilt.

Further, all -isms are essential-izing. They reduce humans to pathology. The American Progressive movement used this to stigmatize a broad swath of human pleasures. And now, most post-modern puritans do the same.

Finally, if materialism exists...it may be a very good thing. One does not have to be Adam Smith to see the good emanating

from the pursuit of things.. Like it or not, things can lead to better and more pleasurable lives. Further, there is no pure pursuit of things...never has been, never will be... all material things come with meaning and social context. People never pursue just things.

I close by quoting James Twitchell (1999, p. 286):

We have not been led into this world of material closeness against our better judgment. For many of us, especially when young, consumerism is our better judgment. And this is true regardless of class or culture. We have not asked to go this way, we have demanded. Now most of the world is lining up, pushing and shoving, eager to elbow into the mall. Woe to the government or religion that says no.

Getting and spending has been the most passionate, and often the most imaginative, endeavor of modern life. We have done more than acknowledge that the good life starts with the material life, as the ancients did. We have made stuff the dominant prerequisite of organized society. Things "R" US. Consumption has become production. While this is dreary and depressing to some, as doubtless it should be, it is liberating and democratic to many more

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WORKING PAPERS

Paradoxes, Ambivalences, and Consumer Coping Strategies of Food Biotechnologies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Tailoring the Design of Web Shopping Sites for both Product Browsing & Product Searching

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Creative Conversation: An Allegorical Perspective on the Parallels between Developing Meaningful Advertisements and Conducting Meaningful Research

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In response to a call for research that investigates creative phenomena (Zinkham 1995), this paper represents an exploration into creativity within advertising practice with inferences for academic research. The goal is to appreciate the nuances of the creative process by listening to the voices of creative professionals. Based on a series of conversations with creative personnel, the paper takes the form of traditional academic prose interspersed with an allegorical conceptualization of the main findings. Emerging parallels between developing meaningful advertisements and conducting meaningful research include a profound understanding of the target consumer, a willingness to challenge existing norms, and unapologetic obedience to personal conscience. Research implications aid in generating

advertisements and research that improve consumers' experiences with a given brand by appreciating a greater sense of connection between interested parties.

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

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

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

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

Methodology

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

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

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

Findings

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

Discussion

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

Implications

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

Conclusion

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

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How Brands Guide Innovation—and Leave Room for the Schumpeterian Entrepreneur

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

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

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

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

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The Manufacturer's Website as a Product Information Channel: A Situation-Based Consumer Perspective

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

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

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

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

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

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

In our analysis we contrasted the manufacturer website to two other websites and to the three best competing other channels. The results provided strong support for the fact that product information channels differ in terms of perceived channel properties. Furthermore, we investigated the role of usage situation as a driver of consumer channel property requirements. A comparison was made between the three situations (a food scare, a new product introduction and a recipe search) and the results revealed that usage situation had a significant effect on the channel properties that consumers require. For example, comparing the food scare situation vs. situation in which consumers were search for a recipe illustrated that consumers required the properties trusted and informative in case of a food scare, whereas they required properties such as stimulating and relaxing in case they were searching for a recipe.

Capturing the Within-Episode Dynamics of Consumption Emotions and Its Impact on Perceived Quality and Satisfaction

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The last decade has seen an increasing recognition of the importance of emotions in consumption experiences, and specifically, as predictors of satisfaction. However, most studies that have investigated the link between consumption emotions and perceived quality and satisfaction with consumption experiences have focused on retrospective measures of emotions, which are not without bias. Moreover, existing literature on consumer dis/satisfaction have considered emotions as arising from one's perceived quality of product or provider performance, while providing limited insights into how consumers' emotions could in turn impact the perceived provider performance. Such a modulation is likely to happen in service contexts, where providers and customers interact to "co-produce" the service experience. Given this mutual interaction, both consumption emotions and service performance are expected to vary in parallel over the course of the consumption episode. We therefore argue that within-episode fluctuations in emotions represent important aspects of the service experience, and that such complex dynamics cannot be captured in a single general measure of retrospective emotions. Existing studies that have attempted to capture emotion dynamics have been limited in number, and often limited in their contexts or in their

operationalization of emotion dynamics. For instance, most of these studies have primarily considered changes in emotions from one episode to another, or the impact of discrete fluctuations in one facet of emotions on perceived quality of provider performance and satisfaction within a given service episode. None of them have directly assessed the change in momentary emotions over the course of a given episode.

Study Objectives

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

Methods

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

Results

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

Discussion

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

Conclusion

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

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

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

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

On the other hand, if the ad endorser's pictorial representation differs from ad viewers' typical mental representation of the endorser (e.g., the endorser is represented at an age that does not correspond to his/her period of fame), presentation of the ad's mirror reversal will trigger a distinctive processing due to (1) the perceptual novelty of the percept (due to its lack of typicality, the mirror reversal of the percept

had not been mentally encoded prior to the presentation of the ad—Corballis 1974), and (2) the perceptual differences between the mentally-encoded mirror reversal of a typical representation of the endorser, and the presented mirror reversal of an atypical representation of the same endorser. The double distinctive nature of the processing, by warranting viewers' attention, will foster a feeling of recollective experience (Mantyla and Cormoldi 2002; Mantyla 1997; Roediger 1996).

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

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

The present research endeavor is seen as significantly contributing to the existing marketing literature, as few researchers have investigated pictorial stimuli in advertising, especially within a framework focusing on memory for and attitude toward an ad. The mirror reversal of a pictorial advertising is seen as a potentially highly effective attention-catching device which can be paralleled with other, previously-studied picture-enhancement strategies (e.g., color enhancement in print ads—Meyers-Levy and Peracchio 1995). More specifically, adopting as a corporate logo or ad a slightly modified, i.e., slightly atypical representation of a well-known endorser's face, may allow advertisers to subsequently use the mirror reversal of that logo or ad to single out a new or distinctive product line, and attract consumers' attention to the new product offering (and increase in the process viewers' attitude toward the ad—and the advertised product). If such advertising method has already been adopted by some corporations (e.g., Whiskas for its "favorites" product line), this is the first time, to the author's knowledge, that the effect of mirror reversal on consumer recollection has been studied.

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Brand Names as Sources and Targets of Tangential Implicit Associations

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

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

Winkelman, Schwartz, Fazendeiro, and Reber (2002) note the clear effects of perceptual fluency on subsequent judgments even under conditions of strained cognitive resources. Proposing that automatic processes play an important role, they make a conceptual distinction between objective fluency (high-speed, efficient mental processing) and subjective fluency (associated with a conscious

experience). As the two types of fluency often become dissociated along conceptual lines reminiscent of the implicit-explicit dichotomy, measuring them arguably requires distinct types of procedures.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Differentiating Hedonic Consumption On the Basis of Experiential Qualities and Emotional Make-up

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

Conventionally, consumption goals, and brand positioning strategies designed to appeal to those goals, have been described as either hedonic or utilitarian. Utilitarian consumption is task-oriented, and focused on efficiency (Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994; Wolfinger

and Gilly 2001). Hedonic consumption focuses on the pleasure that arises from the consumption experience and the enjoyment it produces (Babin et al. 1994; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Lofman 1991). Utilitarian consumption, then, is focused on outcomes while hedonic consumption seeks fun during the experience.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chance and Luck Orientations

Luck is used to explain successes and failures not attributable to personal factors like ability and effort, or to more situational factors like task difficulty (Weiner et al. 1972). Chance refers to the fact that precise future outcomes cannot be predicted (Wagenaar & Keren 1988). Chance is also often misconceived, as people believe that equally probable events are distributed fairly and evenly (Wagenaar 1989; Wagenaar & Keren 1988; Keren 1994; Friedland 1998), leading to the belief that uncertain outcomes are dependent on one another.

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

Uncertainty Orientation*Luck Internals & Luck Externals*

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

Chance Internals & Chance Externals

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

Method

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

Major Findings

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

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

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

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

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

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

Theoretical and Conceptual Background

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

Benefits of OWOM Information Giving

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

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

Results of an Exploratory Study

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

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

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A Multi-Attribute Multi-Stage Model of Online/Offline Shopping Preferences

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

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

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

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

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The Objectification of Moral Support: An Ethnography of Networks in the Making

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

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

Persuasion and Haptic Properties: There's More to Touch than Meets the Eye

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

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

This paper will incorporate two lab studies that will allow us to control aspects of the situation to look carefully at process factors. A third study moves into the field to increase the external validity of the findings as well as to examine the effect of actual charitable donation behavior by appeal type. We have selected appeals by charitable organizations as our context for several reasons. First, this is a natural setting in which individuals are familiar with persuasive appeals. Second, in this context, both attitudes toward the appeal and toward the organization, as well as behavior measures, are easily obtainable. Finally, using non-profit organizations also allows us to extend the research using a field study for a third study to look at actual donation behavior by type of appeal.

The first study examines the effects of the type of appeal as well as the individual difference NFT on attitude toward the organization as well as behavioral measures of willingness to donate time or money to the organization. Study 1 is a 2 (NFT, high/low determined by a median split) x 3 (type of appeal; no haptic information, haptic congruent information, haptic incongruent information) x 3 (valence of haptic information; positive, neutral, negative) with the first factor measured between subjects and the second and third factors manipulated between subjects. Congruency and valence of touch information was determined by a pretest. The context for this study is an appeal for donations to the local arboretum; one example of congruent touch information is a piece of tree bark, while a piece of steel wool would be an example of incongruent touch information. The second study replicates Study 1 with an additional manipulation of motivation to process information. Past research has found greater effects for vividness under lower motivation to process conditions. Controlling for this in a lab study may allow additional insights.

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

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

Globalization of Consumption and Advertising in a Transitional Market

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

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

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

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A Case of Pre-Consumption: How Critical Schools Shape “Ordinary” Viewers’ Consumption of the Artist Caravaggio

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CONCEPTUALIZATION

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

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

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

(Lambert, p. 15)

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

METHOD

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

The Spiritual

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

The Erotic

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

The Psychological

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

MAJOR FINDINGS

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

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

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

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

AXIOM 4: Caravaggio’s work, like that of many artists, offers a number of what Gibson calls “affordances”—images of potential utility or danger. The more affordances provided by an artist, the more footholds a critic may gain into his work.

AXIOM 5: The more “ways of seeing” that critics can attach to an artist, the longer the artist lives. As Proust wrote in *Sodom and Gomorrah*, ‘Theories and schools, like microbes and globules, devour each other and, through their struggle, ensure the continuity of life.’

Environmental and Ethical Consumers’ Concerns for Food Products

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

Environmental and ethical consumers’ concerns: similar problems and differences

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marketing and communication implications

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

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

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

Research avenues

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

Methodological questions also have to be answered: how to measure environmental and ethical concerns without bias ? How to measure consumers’ willingness to pay an ethical premium ? Conjoint analysis could be used to estimate this consumers’ willingness, but it raises the problem of the validity of non-observed choices. Vickrey or BDM auctions bring an interesting alternative to hypothetical approaches, and will thus be used in our research to reveal true consumers’ willingness to pay (Wertenbroch and Skiera, 2002).

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Images of Black Women in U.K. Magazine Advertising

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Introduction

In consumer behavior research there has been almost total silence about the representation of black women in advertising; and the implications for social comparison. White women have been the traditional focus of studies undertaken in response to critiques of the representation of women in advertising. However women's magazines are an important influence on ideas about beauty, race and gender. Where black women's images in advertising have been explored their looks have often been homogeneously classified as 'sensual/exotic'; whereas differentiation has been noted for the white models. This study examines how black women are portrayed in U.K. advertising.

Social comparison

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

Research questions

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

Method

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

Discussion

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Future research involves looking for the conditions under which implicit interpersonal influence takes place. Other sources of motivation besides topic relevance are worth studying (e.g.: involvement, accountability, etc.). Also, other factors may moderate the effect. For example, self-construal differences (i.e.: independent or interdependent) may also moderate implicit interpersonal influences. Finally, it would be interesting to properly disentangle the psychological processes that drive this phenomenon.

Consumer Credit Behavior: A Conceptual Model and Proposed Research Agenda

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The use of credit cards has become an area of social and economic concern, particularly in the past ten years. The development of a model to study consumer credit behavior appears to be an important issue given the recent increase in use, and misuse of credit cards. This paper proposes a research model of consumer credit behavior, identifying the antecedents contributing to one's level of credit consciousness, and the resulting credit behavior activity. Previous studies have been identified that addressed various aspects of consumer behavior, including those that have dealt with credit card activity. These studies are utilized as a basis for the development of an overall contextual model of consumer credit behavior.

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

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

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

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

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

The Culture of Voluntary Simplicity

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

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

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

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

The respondents indicated that most of the practices they adopted as part of their efforts at simple living required a moderate to moderately high level of change in their behavior. Recycling required the least behavioral change, presumably because many communities have put curbside recycling systems in place. Respondents also noted that simplifying practices sometimes work against one another. For example, moving to a rural community in search of a slower-paced lifestyle also means more dependence on a car.

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Technology and the Media: Utopian Promises in a Dystopian World

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The current research hypothesizes dual causes for “technophobia,” or fear of and discomfort with technological products. Contrasting Modern and Postmodern views of technology combine with differing levels of consumer expertise regarding technology to result in unmet expectations and subsequent self-blame in the face of technological failure, on the one hand, and a severely negative assessment of the power of technology on the other. This strong influence of the media on perceptions of technology is supported by previous work on the influence of television on perceptions of violence and other social factors.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Do Old Habits Die Hard? The Impact of Time on Consumer Responses to Pricing Information in a New Currency Denomination*Michael Callow, Morgan State University**Dawn Lerman, Fordham University*

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

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

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

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

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

Materialism and Basic Food Groups: The Effects of Status Enhancement and Survival Security Motivations on Materialists'***Choice of Food Groups****Michael W. Allen, University of Newcastle**Sik Hung Ng, City University of Hong Kong**Marc Wilson, Victoria University New Zealand**Shaun Saunders, University of Newcastle*

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

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

Although there is a consensus among theorists that one motivation compelling materialists is status enhancement, the other motivations of materialists are debated. For instance, Inglehart (1977/97) suggests that materialists are driven by survival insecurity. Modern culture is typified by survival insecurity regarding economic self-sufficiency and fear of military or national conflict. Inglehart suggests that survival insecurity during the formative years of socialisation motivates individuals to seek survival security later in life, including acquiring possessions. However, empirical research has reached inconsistent conclusions on the subject (i.e., De Graaf & Evans, 1996; Marks, 1997; Warwick, 1998). Moreover, no research has investigated whether materialists favour a product because the product brings them survival security.

Likewise, no previous study has investigated the ways in which materialism might be expressed in food choice, though the connection seems reasonable. The two theoretical motivations that compel materialists, survival security and status enhancement, could be satiated by food. Food is necessary for survival and so individuals motivated by survival security would likely strive to ensure that food is plentiful. In terms of nutritional values, foods such as meat, fish and dairy products are higher in protein and some minerals than most fruits, vegetables and cereals (except legumes and beans)(ie., Piper, 1996). However, most fruits, vegetables and cereals are higher in carbohydrates, vitamins, some minerals, fibre, and polyunsaturated fat. Thus, in our view, the survival benefits of the various basic foods seems to be evenly distributed among the seven food types, and so individuals concerned about survival security should favour all seven foods strongly but equally. Likewise, if materialism is expressed in food choice and the motivation for doing so is survival security, then materialists should prefer all seven food types strongly though equally.

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

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

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

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

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

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Introduction

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

Similarities Between IB & VS

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

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

Differences Between IB & VS

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

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

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

Moderating Role of Self-Monitoring

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

Methodology

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

Results & Discussion

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

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

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

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BACKGROUND

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

OVERESTIMATION OF USE AT THE TIME OF PURCHASE

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

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

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

THE TRAJECTORY OF USE OVER TIME

Initial use

Studies in analogical learning show that consumers use analogy to learn about a new product category. Analogical learning involves mapping prior knowledge in an existing product domain to the new product domain (Gregan-Paxton and Roedder John, 1997). However, for RNPs, consumers have little relevant objective knowledge. Instead individuals may have different levels of subjective knowledge (i.e. the perceived relevance of their prior knowledge to an RNP) influenced by factors such as advertising and over-confidence. This subjective knowledge is likely to have a significant effect on the persistence of use at an initial period. According to the literature of self efficacy (Bandura, 1989; Elliot and Church, 1997), people's perception of their self-efficacy, rather than their objective ability, determines their

level of motivation, as reflected in how much effort they will exert in an endeavour and how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles. We conjecture that individuals with high subjective knowledge are more likely to have high initial self efficacy and high approach orientation than individuals with low subjective knowledge. High initial self efficacy and approach goal orientation in turn increase consumer's persistence to use the new product and enable them to obtain new objective knowledge.

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

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

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

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

Later use

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

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Internet Usage Across Latino Acculturation Patterns

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

Consumer Acculturation and Internet Usage

Consumer acculturation is the process of adapting to a different consumer cultural environment. When adjusting to a different culture, consumers may settle into routines or lifestyles heavily influenced by strong ethnic attitudes and behaviors, or they may become like the dominant culture. Acculturation recognizes that the adaptation process may result in a variety of lifestyle patterns. These lifestyle patterns are called acculturation categories. Four potential acculturation categories are assimilation, integration, segregation, and marginalization. These categories are distinguished by attitudinal and behavioral dimensions associated with strength of ethnic identity and participation in host versus ethnic related behaviors. The hypotheses in this paper predict that Internet access and usage rates will be lower among Latinos in the segregation category, involvement with the Internet will also be lower in this category and the purpose for which these individuals use the Internet will differ from those in the assimilation category.

Methods

The sample for this study consists of 162 Latino high school students attending a Latino student organization conference sponsored by a university in the northwestern United States. Acculturation categories were determined by using a 29 item acculturation scale designed to place respondents in either assimilation, integration, or segregation categories based upon their responses to attitudinal and behavioral questions. The Internet questions asked about points of access to the Internet (in and out of the home), the number of hours spent on the Internet per day, and the reasons why respondents used the Internet. Internet involvement was measured using two scales, one measuring knowledge of the Internet, and Zaichkowsky's Involvement Scale.

Results

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

Contributions and Suggestions for Further Research

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

Do Females and Males Evaluate Promotional Emails Differently?

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

Differences in Information Processing from Print Ads and Web Pages

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

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

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

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

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

Method

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

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

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

Results

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

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The Private World of the internet Shopper: An Exploratory Study of Product Conspicuousness, Self-Congruity and On-line Purchase Behavior

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Internet consumer behavior research has to date generally centered on investigating the type of people who would be more likely to use the Internet for information and transactions (Goldsmith, ; Lynch, Kent, & Srinivasan, ; Smith & Whitlark) and the types of products that lend themselves to online purchasing (Kwak, Fox, & Zinkhan). The investigation reported here explores the effect of purchasing online on consumers' self image and purchase intention.

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

METHOD

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

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

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

RESULTS

Scales

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

Hypothesis testing

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

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

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

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

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

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

DISCUSSION

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

The Moderating Effect of Context on Consumer Evaluations of Restaurant Menu Items

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Study Background

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

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

Method and Results

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

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

Attitude and purchase intention measures for the target and non-target items show both multivariate main effects of the nutritional frame and the nutrition information manipulation. (However, at times these effects must be interpreted with caution because there are

several significant univariate interactions between the independent variables.) There are also consistent univariate main effects of the nutritional frame across the dependent variables. When the nutrition information for the non-target items is provided, nutrition-related attitude ($F=23.9; p<.001$), overall attitude towards the product ($F=27.3, p<.001$), and purchase intentions ($F=19.5, p<.001$) decrease. Because the nutrient values (when provided) were based on CSPI testing, these findings show that effects of awareness of the (unfavorable) nutrition information for the non-target item affects important measures of consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions.

However, nutritional frame and nutrition information interact to influence target item purchase intentions and product attitude. Relevant plots indicate when there is no nutrition information for the target item, both the purchase intentions and attitude toward the target item are essentially identical ($p's>.50$), regardless of the presence of the frame. When the target item nutrition information is unfavorable, provision of the negative nutrition frame increases purchase intentions and leads to more favorable product attitudes ($p's<.01$). For the favorable target information condition, neither attitudes nor purchase intentions differ significantly ($t's=1.14$ and 0.20 , respectively, $p>.15$) across the frame conditions.

Brief Discussion

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

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

One-Sided vs. Two-Sided e-WOM: Does it Matter?

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

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

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

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

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

Using the consumer reviews from a real Web site where readers rate the reviews on its usefulness, we study whether the usefulness rating covaries with the argument type, i.e. one-sided vs. two-sided. Our methodology consists of a content analysis of selected reviews for fiction and non-fiction books to determine the argument type. We analyze the covariance of argument type and the usefulness of the reviews using a regression analysis. Our results suggest that two-sided reviews are deemed more useful than their one-sided counterparts by readers. Additionally, we also find that the length of the review is also positively correlated with usefulness.

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Pyrrhic Victories in Consumer Choice: How the Rejection of Inferior Alternatives Weakens the Prevailing Option

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"One more such victory and I am lost"

— Pyrrhus of Epirus

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

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

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

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

However, subjects in both rejection conditions did evaluate the chosen alternative more favorably than did those in the information condition, suggesting that the rejection lead to the bolstering of their choice, consistent with dissonance reduction.

However, in the second study, the rejection of the inferior alternative decreased the evaluation of the chosen alternative. In this study, the inferior alternative was characterized by a small difference on an important attribute. For example, subjects chose between a large

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

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

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Gender- and Context- Specific Beliefs about Anxiety and Anger Episodes

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

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

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

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

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

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

supportive responses. Anger beliefs were differentiated by context only for action tendencies, with more confrontation and less controlled responses in episodes that arose in service consumption than in daily life.

Brands as Complements to the Self

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

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

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

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

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

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

Results for the hypotheses were encouraging. Overall there was support for respondents selecting the human and brand companions with the highest overall ranking on the salient dimension. Results for the "Rugged" situation were remarkable—with 54% of the respondents selecting their most rugged companion to accompany them. Additionally, outcomes in 4 of the 5 scenarios were favorable, with respondents selecting the highest ranked human companion for the cued personality dimension at a proportion greater than chance. For H_{1b} , the strongest results were for the jeans product category for which 3 of the 5 situations (Sophisticated, Sincere, and Competent) yielded excellent results—where more than 40% of respondents selected the brand of jeans with the highest ranking on the salient personality dimension. Results for the watch category were mixed, with moderate support for the "Sophisticated", "Sincere", and "Rugged" situations (34+%).

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

The results of this study suggest that people can show preference for several brands within a product category, depending on the usage situation. Findings also support the notion that brand personality comes into play—not only when the personality fits the person—but when the personality fits the situation. It is hoped that the merging of friendship theory with the brand personality construct will open up new avenues of inquiry that explore the idea of a brand as an instrumental friend or companion.

Impact of Information Organization and Presentation on Visual Attention to Target Stimuli in Online Content and E-Tailing Web Sites

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The Internet economy has been dubbed as the “attention economy” as net users are glutted with gigantic amount of information and their attention grows scarcer with the continuing information overload (Davenport and Beck, 2001). At the individual site level, the challenge is even more conspicuous as online publishers occupy every possible screen real estate with online ads and e-tailers peddle their sales items in their already crowded homepages. Thus, it is not surprising that stories about net users who complain about intrusive online ads or online shoppers irritated by poor design continue to make headlines in e-commerce reports (Nielsen Norman Group, 2002).

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

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

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

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

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

The Impact of Social Satisfaction on Consumer Satisfaction Judgment

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

In order to account for the importance of social aspects of satisfaction, social satisfaction is proposed and used to compare with attribute satisfaction in terms of their impact on overall satisfaction and brand loyalty. *Social satisfaction* is defined as an affective state as a result of interacting with other consumers. *Attribute satisfaction* is defined as the consumer’s subjective satisfaction judgment resulting from observations of attribute performance (Oliver 1993). *Overall satisfaction* is defined as an affective state that is the emotional reaction to a product or service experience. Overall satisfaction is viewed at a global consumption level while attribute satisfaction is viewed at an attribute level, and the latter is not the only determinant of former (Spreng et al. 1996). To illustrate the importance of social satisfaction,

consider the following scenario: a bunch of friends went to see a movie together and it turned out to be a terrible movie (low attribute satisfaction). However they interacted with each other in a happy fashion (high social satisfaction). They may feel happy anyways about the entire consumption experience, despite the fact that the movie was horrible.

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

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

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

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The Interplay of Gender and Masculinity Schema in Consumer Responses to Emotional Advertising

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

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

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

However, while acknowledging the existence of gender-emotion stereotypes, we must allow for the gender difference in emotional expertise or intelligence. Past research has identified females as the more expert gender in experiencing and expressing emotions and in

adapting to diverse emotional contexts. Compared with males, females are more flexible in handling emotions and less constrained by the social rules imposed upon by emotion-gender stereotypes. Along this line of argument, we expect that females will be equally sensitive to both anger- and anxiety-based advertising appeals while males' responses will differ as moderated by the gender-emotion stereotypes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Men and Their Machines

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ABSTRACT

Extreme identification with automobiles is a predominantly male fascination. This paper reports on depth interviews with such men as well as observations conducted at various car shows in order to understand what these vehicles mean to American automobile enthusiasts. They see their cars as both extensions of themselves and as animate beings. The care they lavish upon these vehicles is both fetishistic and sacralizing. The paper concludes with an assessment of the positive and negative effects of their "auto-eroticism" on their lives and the lives of other family members.

There are few possessions as important to many adult American men as their cars. They often lavish more time, money, emotion, and effort on acquiring, learning about, and caring for these vehicles than they do on other family members. Those who are most involved in their vehicles include restorers of old automobiles, automobile collectors, members of car clubs, and those who show their vehicles at special auto shows and concours d'élégance. The present study involved both observation at such venues and depth interviews with 40 such men.

Love of automobiles, motorcycles, and trucks is an overwhelmingly male preoccupation (Bayley 1986, Marsh and Collett 1986, Miller 2001; Schouten and McAlexander 1992, Stone 1966, Stotz 2001; Weiland 1955), despite the fact that females buy nearly half of the cars sold in the U.S. (Lane 1991, Sanford 1983, Simmons 1983). The greater male passion for automobiles is less surprising given the association of such vehicles with power, danger, mobility, status competition, and industrial dominance over nature, all of which are stereotypically male fixations as well. But motor vehicles are more important to some men than others, and it is the more extreme automobile enthusiast who is the subject of this study. The research is based on depth interviews with 40 such men, and observations conducted at four concours d'élégance, two automobile show competitions, and a professional monster truck mud racing competition.

The men studied range in age from 19 to 70 and range in experience with cars from those who have recently purchased their first vehicles to those who have more than two dozen in their current collections. The cars and trucks they own are diverse as well and include a "monster truck", a 1905 Cadillac, a 1979 Subaru, a 1964 Bentley, a 1974 Pantera, and a 1990 Corvette. Nevertheless, a number of common themes emerged in analyzing these interviews and observations. Together they help understand the potency of the symbolism than many men invest in their machines.

CARS AND PEOPLE, CARS AS PEOPLE

Cars as Prosthetic Extensions of Self

In Thomas Pynchon's (1966) *The Crying of Lot 49* used car salesman Mucho Maas is an observer of lives as he watches customers "exchange a dented, malfunctioning version of himself for another, just as futureless, automotive projection of somebody else's life." For like clothes and houses, vehicles appear to act as prosthesis for many men (Belk 1988). As with our bodies, we control our car, we feed it, we recognize its waste products; we bathe it and apply cosmetic pastes; we attempt to nurse it through breakdowns, fits of coughing, and other ailments; and we inevitably observe its aging, perhaps to the point where only cosmetic surgery and parts transplants can prolong its life. No mere anthropomorphism, we identify our cars with our selves (Richards 1994).

We also personalize our vehicles in various ways in order to bond more fully with them (McCracken 1988) and make them a more direct expression of who we are (e.g., de Pyssler 1992; Hebdige 1988; Lefebvre 1989; Solomon 1992; Stern and Solomon 1992). A 33-year-old man who customizes his cars and trucks noted:

I kind of feel like if you are not driving anything that is you, nobody recognizes you, nobody knows who you are. [So you like to build your car like you?] Yes. That orange truck back there, all I would have to do is pull that out, drive it around the block, and I'll bet I would have five or six people telling me that they saw my truck the other day. I don't know, it starts to become you. Somebody knows that is your truck. There isn't any others running around that color, that way, that clean. Then you're noticed. People picture you that way. That is what you do and that is what you are.

In one common version of this identification with vehicles, the man takes on the characteristics of the cathected vehicle. Thus a powerful engine gives the owner who controls it a feeling of enhanced power, a beautiful automobile body provides the man a beautiful body, and high performance handling makes the man feel capable of high performance as well (see Bloch and Bruce 1984). Such identification with the car-as-body is also seen in the pain some men claim to experience when their beloved automobile is scratched, dented, or otherwise harmed (Neiderland and Sholevar 1981).

Sex Appeal. For those who see their cars as a sexual extension of themselves, damage to their vehicle can represent castration (Lane and Sternberg 1985). At the concours d'élégance held each year in Salt Lake City, the judges (all male) are careful to inquire of those whose cars they inspect whether there are any parts of the car they do not want touched or opened. If, this is an expression of aversion to homosexual approach, then the tactic of many concours entrants of placing mirrors under their automobiles in order to show their undersides can be seen as sexual exhibitionism. In a common variant of the sexual version of vehicle identification, certain men see possessing the right car as offering them a magical sexual charm that will make them irresistible to women. Jim, a 32-year old automobile mechanic, explains his belief in such magic:

[I] got a lot more woman in those cars. I picked up my girlfriend in that car... The MR2. I picked up a lot of girls in the Porsche too! ...*Definitely* a womanizing device, but only from the fact that my MR2 was so much different than standard [And that drives woman crazy?] It does. Their tits get hard. [He laughs.] [Would these woman go for you only after seeing your car?] Well of course before, because I have a magnetic personality. But after they saw the car that just cinched it up so they would want to take me to bed. Women have this thing with cars. What it is I don't know, but they go after guys that have the cars. If I wouldn't have had my little truck, my girlfriend wouldn't have taken me home with her—well, she would have anyway, but she wouldn't have stuck around if I didn't have the MR2.

In another view the automobile is an advertisement of male wealth rather than sex appeal and in the traditional equation men

offer (and women seek) wealth and power in dating while women offer (and men seek) youth, beauty, and sex (Belk and Coon 1991; Hirschman 1987). Others (e.g., Marsh and Collett 1986) suggest that women judge men by their cars because they see these automobiles as an expression of the owners' personalities. With only men in the current study, these alternate interpretations, as well as the underlying assumption that men's cars are important to women, await further work.

Status Symbolism. The power struggle Jim refers to near the end of the preceding quotation involves status competition through the conspicuous consumption of motor vehicles. Many men seek prestige through automobiles in order to enhance their self image without necessarily seeking to exchange this prestige for something else. Thus, Bill, a 34-year-old owner of a small restaurant, explains:

[Why weren't you satisfied with the Volkswagen?] Wasn't fast enough—not enough status, or speed. [Status and speed,—is that what you are looking for?] Yeah. [What car do you want to have?] A 928 [Porsche]. [How come?] Status and speed [laughs]. You need a car, because cars kind of like set you apart from anyone else. It shows where you have got in life, you know? Get in that fucker and you're either a Pinto driver or you're a Porsche driver. Same way in life. ... you want to be successful you've got to look successful. So you get in the car that gives you that look and you naturally become what you think you are.... Cars separate you from mediocrity. ... people treat you differently just through the car you drive. You are where they want to be right now. They will get out and say, "Fuck, this guy has a Porsche! What's he doing that I'm not? Why is he enjoying all this shit and I'm not?" Then they fuckin' treat you like "Come on in." instantly you can have more respect. ... No one is going to walk down the street to look at your portfolio. You either have a Rolex or a Porsche—and that sets you apart.

Auto-biography. In several cases the car marque becomes a heraldic device, as with a man in his forties who has restored several MGs, Jaguars, and a Sunbeam (all British) because his family ancestry is British. Often the purchase of old automobiles becomes a means of reclaiming a more immediate past. Two men in their seventies restored Ford Model A's because they used to have such cars when they were in high school. A 50-year-old owner of a wrecking yard has restored a 1947 Mercury that reminds him of one that a friend owned in high school and a 1957 Ford Sunliner like the one he had when he got out of the Army, even customizing them in the same ways as their predecessors. Another 60-year-old restored an MGTF like the one that was his first car when he was in college as well as an XKE like the one he wished he had in the 1960s. He explained: "People buy the cars they wanted to own when they were in school and couldn't." Another man has a replica of a 1966 AC Cobra (a \$25,000 reproduction of an original that costs ten times as much) and explained that the car came out when he was a senior in high school and he always wanted one: "It was every school boy's dream back then." This is consistent with observations by Dannefer (1980, 1981) and seems to be an attempt, especially by middle-aged men, to reclaim lost youth and all the excitement they associate with the period from their late teenage years through their early twenties. It was during this age period that they remember their first all-consuming interest in an automobile. The intensity of their present automobile involvement does not seem contingent on whether or not they were able to consummate their first auto purchase desires. A Freudian interpretation suggests that this is a transference or sublimation of sexual desires that also peak during this period of life (e.g., Weiland 1955).

Another way in which autos serve as autobiography for the men studied is as cues for recalling personal history, often aided by photographs of prior cars. Just as others use photographs of people in their family albums, automobiles are found to be prominent in family photo albums even for those not obsessed with automobiles (Belk 1991, Chalfen 1988, Lesy 1980), suggesting that they may serve more generally as temporal milestones in American society. Several men in the present study had photo galleries on their walls showing cars they once owned. Others had photos of cars they had restored, showing various stages of the restoration. Thus one man (age 58) looking at photos of his cars reflected, "Each car reminds me of a special time in my life." He later assessed his involvement with cars *in toto*: "It's my whole life." For if you are what you drive (Couch 1987), then prior autos and auto activities should be key building blocks for a sense of past to those men who believe this.

Cars as Beings

Cars as Children, Lovers, and Friends. Cars, for a number of men, are also regarded as if they were alive, and not mere machines. They often see cars as lovers or children. "It's my baby" said one man, while a prior owner of exotic Jaguar referred to its being "adopted" by a man in Geneva (see also Schneider 1971). The man with the Cobra replicar said, "It's kind of like my baby. I wouldn't sell the car to just anyone. They must take care of the car or it would be like child abuse—execution would be too good for someone who didn't take care of it." And another man claimed "I could not take [my cars] to the movies and leave them. I am very protective, like a mother with her children."

Others named their cars or trucks in ways that suggest it is seen as a lover more than a child: "My Cheree," "Shot Through the Heart," or "Candy," for instance. One car collector explained, "When I see a car I want, it's love at first sight. That's how it was with the Lamborghini. I saw one race in Europe and I just had to have one."

Having a collection of automobiles provides people with a second love—like a mistress. These men slip away from their wives and families to spend time alone washing, waxing, babying, and admiring their cars:

spending countless hours with a toothbrush and soap, cleaning under every inch of each rim, because of the uncontrollable emotional investment. This is why very few spouses condone their husband's addiction—they feel like they are competing with the cars for their husband's attention. These cars are also like an old friend. They are always there and always seem to listen and understand your problems. They're like an old familiar face you can turn to when you have nowhere else to turn.

And one man recognized the car-as-mistress analogy, but explained the "My wife would rather I work on it than on her girlfriend."

Car Personalities. Both particular cars and makes of cars are seen as having personal characteristics. Several men consistently referred to their cars as "she," noting "She's cranky," "She handles well," and so forth. One exception in assigning cars feminine personalities was the mud-racing and car-crushing monster trucks, where a masculine name is much more common, because of the emphasis on performance and power rather than just appearance. Here names included "Taurus," "Steamboat Willie," and "The Mud Stud." There were often inferences made about owner personalities based on the kind of car they drove. Bill, the 34-year-old Porsche owner explained:

I would not get into a Corvette. It performs maybe better than a Porsche, but it has the wrong status, wrong image! [What kind of image does the Corvette have?]

Polyester and gold chains, [laughs] leather jackets. They walk into a gas station, wing the gas card down, keep looking back at your car like yeah, I'm bitchin'. Porsche owners don't have to do that. [How does the Porsche owner behave?] Its either you or me pal, that kind of deal. Never looks at anybody; kind of more secure. Corvette owner, man he will wax his car out in the park first time he gets a chance, just to show everybody, "Hey look at me!" The 'Vette owner is someone who wants everyone to know that he has a Corvette. Where a real Porsche owner is secure about himself.

Nor did Bill find all Porsche owners to be admirable:

[So what do you think of the 944 driver?] Garbage, ego problem, punk: hangs out at Bourbon Street, hangs out at the Dead Goat, hangs out at Oscar's. People that buy 944's or 928's have major massive ego problems. They know nothing about Porsche. They buy them for the ego trip.

CARS AS SACRED OBJECTS

Great devotion is directed to activities involving automobiles for these men, such that, for them, automobiles can often be regarded as sacred (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). For these men the cars and car activities in which they are absorbed are revered and regarded as fundamentally set apart from the ordinary profane world. Processes by which objects can be made sacred or kept sacred include ritual, sacrifice, pilgrimage, and separation from the profane world of commodities (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). Each of these processes was observed among the automobile enthusiasts studied.

Ritual

There is some evidence that when greater importance is attached to cars, they are better cared for (Belk 1987). When performed with proper reverence, such washing and waxing of a car can be regarded as a baptismal ritual (Mol 1976). The importance of this ritual was suggested by Jim who washed his car every Saturday for the past 16 years:

[How much time would you spend driving it and working on the car?] On my own, probably every Saturday for a half day. [Every week?] Every week, religiously. [How important was this, would it come before a date or something like that?] Oh yeah, I did not go anywhere unless it was clean. Nowhere! But I think that's the same for most guys. ... But before, sometimes I would wash it everyday. Every day boy! That's the thing, you don't want to be in a dirty car.

Similarly, Bill explained the care rituals he performed on his Porsche:

On a good day, if I didn't have anything to do I could spend 4 hours cleaning it. Then jump in it, drive it to the gas station and feel good about it. ... Get a Q-tip with Armor-All on it and slide it down the seams, pull off the wheels polish them up, shampoo the carpet, all that stuff.

The most extreme care rituals are enacted by those who enter their cars in automobile shows. At one concours, every time a line of cars being driven or pushed to their assigned display locations stopped, one man jumped out and polished his wheels. Using soft paint

brushes, cotton swabs, toothbrushes, and toothpicks to remove stray dust is common. The "white glove" inspection by the judges in special white garments is a separate ritual by these designated "priests" and also highlights the sacred status of the cars and reinforces the care rituals their owners have performed on them. It is no wonder that after the rituals of restoration, care, and devotion performed on these cars, many who show them place "hands off" and "please to not touch" signs on their cars.

Perhaps a more widely shared ritual is the annual automobile show, as described by Greeley (1962):

The cult of the sacred car has its adepts and initiati. No gnostic more eagerly awaited a revelation from an oracle, than does an automobile worshipper await the first rumors about the new models. It is at this time of the annual seasonal cycle that the high priests of the cult—the auto dealers—take on a new importance as an anxious public eagerly expects the coming of a new form of salvation.

Fewer and less dramatic annual style changes in automobiles may have rendered these particular public rituals less frequent, but surely no less intense. Besides the anticipation of seeing new models in person, informants report scrutinizing automobile magazines and Internet sites for sneak previews and annual reviews of new models.

The rituals of automobile enthusiasts also involve secret or special knowledge shared by all "true believers," as Plascencia (1985) found among "low riders" in the American Southwest. This knowledge may be gained from definitive publications on a type of car (called "bibles" by their readers), but must often be supplemented by other magazines, Internet bulletin boards, and discussions interpreting and updating the classic sources. When men meet at auto shows as strangers they are then united by ritual discussions disclosing their shared esoteric knowledge of the automobiles they love. The litany of these discussions and the beliefs that constitute the dogma of automobile sects is illustrated by Jim, a Porsche owner and a true believer:

The original Porsche and the originator, Dr. Ferdinand Porsche was incorporated by Hitler to build the peoples' car, the Volkswagen. Since he has died his son took over and totally fucked up the company by building 928's and 944's. His father, Dr. Ferdinand Porsche was only interested in building the rear engine cars. A True Porsche enthusiast that has a basic knowledge of what the history of the car was, the history of Dr. Ferdinand Porsche—who he was, who he worked with—how the car performs, how the car treats them; a performance-oriented person that wants a car that handles, accelerates, brakes, and corners to the driver's ability. He is an enthusiast!

Another such automobile cult (there are many) is that of the Volkswagen 1300 or "bug" (Klapp 1969, Hammond 1970).

Salvation and Sacrifice

If Jim sounds a bit like an evangelical preacher, the sacred metaphor also includes a healing process in which enthusiasts are able to rescue and save damned automobiles from the abyss of decay and corruption by laying their skilled and caring hands upon them. The metaphor of saving these cars is one often employed by those who restore them. The process of restoration can also be seen as one of sacrifice and commitment of time, money, skill, and effort. For one 65-year-old who loves Model A's, it was an abomination to see one that had been turned into a street rod. He bought it in 1965 with the intent of restoring it to "the way it should be." Over the next

seven years he spent an estimated 4400 hours and \$20,000 stripping it down and rebuilding it into a 1929 Model A. Another man who had restored five vehicles spoke with pride of finding them in fields with only weeds and field mice attending them, and then bring them back to their former glory. Others spoke with similar pride of their restored cars and trucks as having started out as literal basket cases—mere baskets of parts. Bringing the dead back to life is the implicit metaphor in all of these accounts.

Pilgrimage

One man who shows the Corvettes he restores at Corvette shows around the U.S. refers to these shows as “heavens.” The greatest pilgrimage site for automobile believers is the annual show in Hershey, Pennsylvania, which is the largest in the country. The other prominent type of pilgrimage site for car restorers is automobile museums, such as the former Harrahs’ collection. When this collection was sold off, enthusiasts saw this as a great sacrilege.

Not all automobile restorers bring their cars out of their protective wrappings only for shows. Another type of enthusiast makes a different sort of pilgrimage by taking their cars, along with fellow enthusiasts, on special tours. These tours are for specific categories of cars such as one- and two-cylinder cars and the participants all dress in appropriate vintage clothing for the tours. As with religious pilgrims traveling by foot, the going can be slow. The smaller engine cars slow to 5 miles per hour on hills and traveling 70 miles takes all day. Being in the company of fellow pilgrims is an important part of these tours and results in a great feeling of kinship or *communitas*, as is typically the case with religious pilgrimages (Turner and Turner 1978). The automobile clubs to which many of these men belong offer a similar spirit of *communitas*. But the clubs are careful to include only true believers, and thus the president of a Jaguar club says, “Replicars [reproductions with non-original parts] aren’t real. A replicar [owner] could never get into our club.”

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Social and Asocial Aspects

Cars and sports are so much a part of men’s conversational repertoires that some efforts to get men to really relate to one another have found it necessary to ban these topics of conversation (Adler 1991). Besides providing an external focus for conversations between men, cars and trucks are often cited by enthusiasts as a common interest that brings the members of their family together. While this is sometimes true, most often in the case of men and their sons, because men are the primary enthusiasts in most families and because these men seldom let others in the family drive their cars, the extent of participation by other family members is in most cases restricted to helping clean the car and attending shows. The wife of a man who restores Ford Thunderbirds proclaimed that she and her husband shared in this hobby. When I asked her for details, she said she helped clean it and, after pausing for a moment to reflect, added enthusiastically, “and sometimes he lets me ride in it.” Even this may be more social than other men who spend countless solitary hours in their garages with their cars. These men’s photo albums and wallets are full of pictures of cars and car shows, rather than people. This is not to say that all men studied preferred cars to people, and for younger men this was rarely the case. But for many men the car is more an escape from people than it is a focus of interaction with people. One man explained how escaping to work on his car provided him with therapeutic benefits: “Its nice because an inanimate object can’t talk back to you. I deal with a lot of rude customers all day and working on the car sort of helps to restore me to sanity.” The solitary nature of driving in an automobile provides

a similar benefit for others, and several men noted that when they are feel stress they jump in their cars and go for a drive.

Addictive and Compulsive Potential

Addiction is both clinically and culturally defined such that labeling something as an addiction requires both dependence and the cultural judgment that this dependence is undesirable (Walker and Lidz 1983). Contemporary Western culture does not commonly describe dependent love of another person as an addiction and it has also generally been willing to exempt dependent love of objects from this label as well (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, and Holbrook 1991). Nevertheless the self-diagnosis of addiction and being a “car nut” came up in a number of interviews to describe the restoration, maintenance, and collecting activity of these men. According to one collector:

The collecting of cars is also like an incurable disease. Once it gets inside of you, you can’t stop looking for a new car. Then once you find one you really like, you’ll go to extremes to get it, even if you can’t use or even sometimes afford it.

For another man who has been collecting and showing cars for 25 years,

It’s [my continued involvement] not for prestige or trophies anymore, but rather it’s more like a disease—like alcoholism. It’s something you just can’t shake. This is what caused the snowball effect in the first place. You start innocently enough in the beginning and before you know it, you’re hooked. That’s why I’ll be playing with my cars until the day I die.

For others, it is working on the cars that has addictive and compulsive aspects. A 25-year-old who is in college saw this danger and disciplined himself accordingly:

Because of school, I only get to work on them [his three cars] during the summer and on breaks. I have to avoid them during the quarter because if I ever started working on them I’d flunk my courses. Once I get started working on them, I can’t stop.

Thus, even though society may not label their behavior addictive, automobile involvement has a seemingly unavoidable attraction to a number of those studied.

Justifications

Given their absorption in their automobiles, these addictive explanations offered by auto enthusiasts might also be seen as justifications to others for what might well be regarded as self-indulgent behavior: I can’t help it; I’m addicted.” But other justifications are offered as well. One theme emphasized by several of those who restore cars is that, “It’s preserving history—our country’s history.” This justification was offered by one collector with 25 cars who was building a museum in order “to give the public an opportunity to enjoy my cars.” Most often such justifications invoke the cloak of science and attempt to suggest that the collector is trying to preserve rare examples of technologically significant accomplishments of civilization (Carter 1978). Less frequently an artistic cannon is invoked with the implicit or explicit rationalization that a thing of beauty is a joy forever. And in cases where the automobile or truck originated in the collector’s family, a more sentimental criterion of preserving family heritage and traditions is offered. One further justification or admission was offered by three of the automobile enthusiasts studied: the difference between a man and a boy is the price of his toys. Rationalizations aside, this playful

ludic aspect of automobile enthusiasm seems to underlie much of the behavior observed in this study.

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Process and Meaning in 'Getting a Tattoo'

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the nature of customer interactions and the development of client/provider relationships in the tattoo industry, a rapidly growing service that has seen an increase in demand for its 'products' over the last two decades and a cultural shift from the deviant to the mainstream. Through the use of a qualitative methodology the identified themes of 'information search', 'approval', 'interpersonal skills', 'trust building and mutual involvement' 'becoming a collector' and 'developing a sense of loyalty' are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades there has been increasing interest on the part of consumer researchers in the relationship between identity and consumption. This interest has instigated a wide range of investigations (Featherstone, 1992; Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Douglas, 1996) many of which are predicated on the view that in contemporary society the identity of an individual is in part a construct of his or her consumption. This is due not only to the physical and non-physical objects a person can consume, but also the symbolic nature of these products (Schouten, 1991; Sarup, 1996). Linked to the creation of identity are issues concerning the body, and in particular the role of the embodied self (Featherstone, 2000; Joy and Venkatesh, 1994; Mauss 1979/1936). The relevance of this can be clearly seen in the growing literature on consumer behaviour relating to the body (Thompson and Hirschman, 1995; Falk, 1994; Featherstone, 2000; Featherstone *et al* 1991; Joy and Venkatesh, 1994; Sweetman, 2000; Synott, 1993) which includes a relatively recent focus on body modification such as cosmetic surgery (Schouten, 1991; Seebarsingh *et al*, 2001) and body art (Sanders, 1989, 1991; Goulding and Follett, 2002; Valliquette and Bamossy, 2001).

One popular form of body adornment which has a long and well documented history is that of tattooing. However it is fair to say that until recently tattooing has been regarded as socially unacceptable and excluded from mainstream fashion in western society. Nevertheless, as a consequence of celebrity role models such as Angelina Jolie and Johny Depp sporting tattoos, and shifts in fashion towards body adornment, including body piercing and tattooing, attitudes have changed, to such an extent that acquiring a tattoo is now seen as part of contemporary popular culture (DeMello, 2000; Camphausen, 2000; Mercury, 2000). Moreover the growing popularity of 'body art' has seen the development of a global multi-billion pound industry (Vale, 1999). In other words, the acquisition and meaning of tattooing has undergone a process of appropriation, first from the tribal, by sailors who used tattooing on particular parts of their bodies as a means of both spiritual and physical protection, and later by working class males (and some women), prisoners and gang members. As a result, tattooing came to be generally associated with criminal or deviant behaviour and carried with it a social stigma. Today, however, tattooing has not only been appropriated, but commodified as the choice of design, meaning, and quality, increases to meet accelerated demand for variety and variations on symbolic representations (Vale, 1999). Moreover, it is no longer possible to classify consumers of tattoos on the basis of age, gender, subcultural activity or class, as increas-

ing numbers from across the social spectrum are acquiring tattoos, all be it in varying quantities and for different reasons (Goulding and Follett, 2002; Armstrong and Murphy, 1997; Millner and Eichold, 2001). According to Irwin (2001) 7 million adults in the USA now have tattoos and they have now become so "thoroughly middle class that the only rebellious thing about them may be the decision not to get one" (p49). In effect there has been a cultural shift and a gradual destigmatization of deviance. Yet despite this, tattooing has received little attention from consumer researchers. Indeed there has only been one study, which specifically interpreted tattooing as a service industry (Sanders, 1985), despite the fact that a survey reported by Vale (1999) indicated that the tattoo sector was one of the fastest growing service industries in the US. Indeed tattooing may validly be classified as a service due to the fact that it has providers (the tattoo artists), clients (those who purchase the tattoo), and involves payment. However, the tattoo, the 'object' that is purchased is unique both in its concept and practice, and has very few comparisons, largely due to the permanency of the act. This brings into question the nature of the relationship, the experience, and importantly, the role of trust due to the very high risk and high degree of involvement surrounding the exchange. This paper explores the nature of this relationship and the factors influencing choice of tattooist, the nature of the experience, and the development of enduring relationships.

METHODOLOGY

The main aims of the research were to gain insights into the nature of the tattoo experience from a range of tattooees, varying in their commitment to adorning their bodies with permanent markings. Rather than starting with a predefined framework the authors adopted an emergent methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) that consisted of the collection of qualitative data in the form of informants stories. Some areas of behaviour are notoriously difficult to research from an 'outsider looking in' perspective and may consequently involve the researcher going 'native' in order to gain access to informants and collect credible data (see for example Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). In the case of tattooing and tattooees Vale (1999) addresses some of the problems faced by the researcher, notably gaining access, trust and dispelling suspicion surrounding the motives of the researcher. Consequently one off interviews were not deemed to be adequate for the purpose of researching the tattoo experience. In order to collect data, one of the authors who is himself very heavily tattooed embarked on a relationship building exercise with a number of key informants including tattoo artists and tattoo consumers, ranging from moderate to heavily tattooed. Tattooists provided client contacts and a total of fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted over a three month period with eight males and seven females ranging in age from 18-38. These were followed up with further meetings and discussions in order to capture the breadth of the experience. In addition to this, one of the researchers joined a discussion list dedicated to extreme body modification. In order to become a member, the applicant is required to write their story or history of becoming a 'tattooee' and submit a photograph of their tattoos. This vetting process is carried out to exclude the 'voyeur'. However, once accepted the new member is given access to all the stories,

pictures and email addresses of the list membership which allows him/her to enter into individual dialogues with informants. These stories helped to inform the analysis and supplemented the interview data. In terms of interpretation, all interviews were transcribed and subjected to a process of coding as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) which involved descriptive analysis through the use of 'open coding' through to the identification of patterns or concepts based on their relationship to each other. This stage involved the use of 'axial coding' which moved the interpretation beyond the level of description to the identification of interrelated themes.

FINDINGS AND KEY THEMES

The tattoo market

Loosely defined, the market for tattoos may be divided into three types, namely:

- 1) *Fashion and aesthetic tattooees*: These individuals usually acquire a tattoo for aesthetic purposes with little thought given to the symbolic or 'tribal' meaning. For example, a flower on the hip or shoulder which can be easily concealed. They are largely influenced by peer group referents and fashion trends and do not see themselves as part of a tattoo community.
- 2) *Committed but concealed tattooees*: This label covers the experienced tattooees who have embarked on a tattoo career, often covering their entire bodies from the neck down with permanent images. Often, each tattoo marks a particular event in the individual's life and may have personal as well as symbolic meaning. However, there is a reluctance to go 'all the way' by tattooing those parts that cannot be concealed, such as the hands and face. This allows the individual to engage in mainstream social and economic activities without incurring the prejudice and stigma that still accompanies extensive body modification (Pitts, 1999). On the other hand the extensive nature of the body art also allows acceptance into one or a number of the tattoo subcultures, such as 'modern primitives', that exist in Western society today.
- 3) *Committed collectors*: These individuals do not see themselves as having a tattoo, but 'being tattooed' (Vale, 1999). Being tattooed is part of an ongoing career of becoming a 'collector' of tattoos whereby the individual's life history is symbolically coded and written on the body. With regard to this group there are few boundaries or limitations to the placing of tattoos. Most cross the line and have facial and hand markings which cannot be concealed. Consequently, many take a conscious and voluntary decision to exclude themselves from the mainstream opting into an alternative subcultural grouping, making their living, often in the industry, and socializing with like-minded individuals. Whilst work from consume behaviour has tended to centre on the notion of regret (Valliquette and Bamossy, 2001), it appears to be those individuals who have impulsively purchased a tattoo and have taken it no further who are more likely to experience regret than those who have consciously developed a personal 'body career'. Nevertheless, longitudinal studies of life-passage may reveal different reactions. After all, having taken the decision to reject the mainstream, the permanency of the act does not easily allow re-entry.

However, having acknowledged that the tattoo market is diverse in terms of motivations and usage, there are a number of common features of the experience, which will of course vary depending upon which stage of the process the individual is at. These include the following:

Information search

Whilst information search is a key aspect of many service encounters, the nature of tattooing probably provokes a greater degree of investigation, time and involvement. Tattoos are permanent. They are considered by most recipients to be works of art, to be created by 'artists' upon a canvass, the body. They are both public and private statements about the individual's identity, and, significantly, the act involves an often extended period of pain and potential risk of infection. Consequently information search is usually extensive, involving the internet and website analysis, personal inspection of premises and tattooists at work, levels of hygiene, a study of portfolios of previous tattoos carried out by the tattooist, and most importantly, discussions with past and existing clients. For example:

Mark aged 18: Having decided to have a tattoo: "The next step was to find an artist to do this for me. It wasn't too hard. My sister had a tattoo done at Addictive Ink and was very happy with the work and general environment of the shop. I'd heard nothing but good things about this place. My sister and I decided to go up and talk to the artist, look around the shop one evening. I went over a few fact sheets that had information on what sort of thing to look for in a shop. I'd read them many times before, but I wanted to be as informed as possible."

Sarah aged 20: "I searched online for what I should look for in a studio, and sure enough I found what I was looking for in seconds. I was told that the best thing to look for is an example of work carried out by the artist, and sure enough an example was right before me! My Mum had gotten a small flower design on her wrist that looked neat and tidy, so I asked where she got it (It was a Devil Bitch)."

First impressions are of vital importance in the decision to proceed and negative images can be an immediate deterrent:

James aged 26: "After what seemed an eternity I went to a tattoo studio in my area (I won't mention any names here). This place really put me off having a tattoo, it was so bad. The artists didn't wear gloves, wash their hands, and were eating and smoking while tattooing. If that didn't make me run for the door, the attitude of one of the owners did!"

The tattooing industry has come a long way since the early days of back street 'scratchers' (unregulated, unlicensed tattooists operating from shabby premises or from home). It is now possible to find tattoo studios that resemble fashionable beauty parlours with highly skilled staff who have undergone extensive apprenticeships. Quality is a matter of expectation and tattooists have to compete for customers in the same way that any other service does.

Approval

Schouten (1991) in his study of cosmetic surgery describes it as 'irreversible, expensive, painful, potentially dangerous, and, nevertheless, increasingly popular..' (p412). Words that could equally apply to the acquisition of a tattoo. Therefore having made a decision to go through with the tattoo, the next vital factor is that

of reassurance that the individual has made the right choice with regard to the tattooist and the parlour. The client needs to be supplied with information that will dispel any doubts that may be lingering as indicated by Rob:

Rob aged 30: "As far as the choices I made that evening I think that the place I went to was the most important. All the guys in the shop were more than helpful, answering any questions I had, joking around with me, and all in all making me feel real confident about choosing to go to Lucky 7. After finishing, all the guys that were in the shop came over to look at my back. I felt so proud when I heard how impressed they all were with the results. I mean these guys do tattoos for a living so the simple fact that they can still see a tattoo that impresses them meant a lot. Then Bob took me over to the other side of the room and took a couple of pictures of it to display in the shop"

Tattoos are individual, they are a supreme mode of self expression. However, they are also judged and interpreted by others both inside and outside the tattoo community. By the aficionados they will be deconstructed and read for symbols which are linked to individual and collective identity and may result in acceptance or rejection by a subcultural group. Maffesoli (1996) talks about the rise in what he terms 'neo-tribes' or the transitory group which is neither fixed or permanent, but involves a constant back and forth movement between tribe and the masses. These neo-tribes may be "effervescent, aesthetic, oriented toward the past or future; they have as their common characteristic on the one hand, a breaking with the commonly held wisdom and, on the other, an enhancing of the organic aspect of the social aggregation" (p96). Moreover, solidarity is expressed through lifestyles that favour appearance and form. According to Sanders (1988), fellow tattooees commonly recognise and acknowledge their shared experience, decorative tastes and relationship to conventional society. Tattooing has an affiliative impact in that it is routinely employed to demonstrate one's indelible connection to primary associates or groups whose members share special interests and activities (Sanders, 1988).

"Becoming tattooed is a highly social act. The decision to acquire a tattoo (and the image that is chosen), like most major consumer products is motivated by how the recipient defines him or herself. The tattoo becomes an item in the tattooee's personal 'identity kit', and in turn is used by those with whom the individual interacts to place him or her into a particular interactions-shaping social category"

Sanders, 1988, p405)

However, unlike the temporary neo-tribe discussed by Maffesoli, the wearing of a tattoo is not temporary, but permanent. It denotes a strong commitment to a particular group or lifestyle, and the larger or more prominent the tattoo, the greater the commitment.

Interpersonal skills, trust building and mutual involvement

Consequently, a least to begin with acquiring a tattoo is not a decision that is taken lightly and relies heavily on reassurance. The degree of reassurance rests largely on the extent of interpersonal skills displayed by the tattooist. Qualities such as honesty, previous experience and humour make the individual feel relaxed, important and create good customer relations. In effect the relationship is not unlike that of doctor/patient. The customer is literally putting his/her skin in their hands to be marked for posterity. As a result a strong sense of confidence needs to be built and expertise in terms of

artwork, range (for example skills in 'nu skool', 'old skool' 'tribal' decorations) and symbolic meaning demonstrated. For example:

Peter, aged 21: "Let me tell you that if you find a good tattoo artist with a sense of humour you are set. My nervousness melted away. Jeff was great. I just sat back and talked with him while he waited for his friends to bring dinner, I came a little early. He was one of the funniest guys I'd met. Right then I was comfortable. I looked through some flashes and photos of his work I was impressed by this. I looked around the room and saw all kinds of various awards and certifications. I knew this was a good one."

Tattoos are more than mere objects of consumption. They are extreme statements which are highly symbolic and riddled with meaning. Mcabbe (1997) discusses the symbolism inherent in tattoos and the current process of commodification and popularisation of body adornment. Accordingly, classic images such as the eagle, the snake, the anchor or the heart are deceptive in their directness and simplicity. Hidden behind these designs are years of technical and artistic experimentation that combine to make an art form. Indeed tattooing has always been closely related to the variety of the culture that surrounds it. However, the current explosion of interest in tattooing has pressed the art-form into a transitional period which challenges many time-tested values of the tattoo community. There is a process of gentrification occurring as new people from different walks of life become involved. Along with this, the aura of store bought has 'muscled' its way into what was once a personal hand made approach (Mcabbe, 1997). However, the personal approach remains a paramount part of the experience.

Linked closely to interpersonal skills is the issue of mutual involvement in the process. The extent to which the artist becomes involved gives the individual confidence in his/her abilities. It also demonstrates commitment on the part of the tattooist, which further helps to alleviate anxieties and allows for a more enjoyable experience.

Jenny aged 20: "I am overjoyed at my new ink, and cannot recommend Mike or Atomic Tattoo more highly. He is a phenomenal artist, who lends a huge amount of artistic consideration to his work. He's also very nice, funny, and not intimidating in the least. I felt that this tattoo was very much a collaboration between Mike and myself, rather than just a business transaction. He put a lot of himself into this tattoo, and I really appreciate that."

Jane aged 22: "The first time I realized that I was getting an awesome tattoo was when Bob (the artist) spent like half an hour just mentally planning out how he was going to do it. I was a little nervous when he said "I'm not going to lie to you, this is going to be a motherf...r" but like I said I had confidence in his abilities."

The tattooist needs to wholeheartedly demonstrate a high degree of self investment in the act, virtually to the same degree as the recipient. Their role goes beyond that of an artist, often, over time developing into educator, advisor and guru. Indeed some of the sample reported feelings akin to falling in love with their tattooist, so intimate is the relationship, whilst others felt the need to gain permission from their tattooist before they would speak to us. This of course brings into question the nature of the experience itself.

Becoming a collector

The act of getting tattooed is highly ritualistic (Irwin, 2001; Vale and Juno, 1989; Klesse, 1999). It involves planning, preparation, sometimes role transitions and a reconceptualisation of identity (Schrouten, 1991). Vail (1999) discusses the process of becoming a collector; a transformation which is physical, due to the alteration of the skin, psychological and sub-cultural. It also alters how the individual perceives his or her skin, and in turn how that skin is perceived by others. Being heavily tattooed still stands outside of conventional norms, and becoming a collector requires devotion to a lifestyle that might be considered marginal. "In short one must want to become a collector". Becoming a collector, or someone who is 'tattooed' as opposed to having a tattoo, is also an educational process, through which the individual learns about the appropriate designs, their meanings and their aesthetics on the individual's canvas.

Angie: "I have been into tattooing for as long as I can remember, I have always been interested in art, my background is in jewellery manufacture, I have always been arty and to me it was just another form of artwork. I had my first tattoo when I was twenty five, it was a tiny spiral, I have always been into spirals and Celtic artwork, I had always wanted one, I didn't want it normal, I wanted it more cartoon like, more free form. I got it when my boy friend at the time went to get one (a tattoo), and the tattooist had some spirals in his flash, but they were too perfect, too regular. I told him to **** it but I've never been too happy with it as it is too regular. At this point in time I have five tattoos in all, the spiral on my ankle, stars and flames on my abdomen, hot rod flames on my wrist, stars behind my ear, and the white tattoo on my back. I have lots of different stories that I tell people, some times if they are annoying me, I tell them it was done with needles dipped in bleach. Everything I have I have drawn myself, I like some tribal stuff but not the spikey stuff. I sketch what I want every time, I know what I want and I know what I like. But with the white one I really wanted that one to look like a Scarification, you know the whiteness of a scar, it was a bit of an experiment. I first got it done by the person I used to work for, he used to say that you couldn't do just white tattoos and when I saw a photo in a magazine I showed him and said to him I told you so! So I got him to do it, Winston has just gone over it again.: I have recently got into traditional body decoration, like the stars behind my ear and flames up my left arm, I wouldn't want pictures, traditional designs seem to flow with the body. The same with old skool designs, my views on them have developed over the last few years, I didn't use to see the appreciation in traditional tattoos before, but all of them are personal."

Joanne: "I was 17 when I got my first tattoo done it was not very good and it was done as part of a thing where every one in the crowd got one. Unfortunately I chose through price instead of quality, it was a small supposed Celtic design on my left arm. As you can imagine it is now covered up with a better design. This sort of put me off getting anything else till I was 25, this was a good thing because it allowed my taste to develop. Otherwise I would have got just the usual sort of crap that everyone gets instead of something that means something special to me and no-one else. I decided to go get another tattoo as I said when I was 25, I was working down south at the time and two of my male work colleagues had absolutely beautiful designs, the work was so intricate it was unbelievable. I asked

were they got it done and they told me. This tattooist was literally world class, he had at least 20 years experience, this was all evident when I went to his shop for the first time. I chose a design paid my money and then had to wait six weeks, this was how good he is there was and still is a four to six week waiting list to get a tattoo from him. I mean he isn't your usual 'mom and dad' or little itty bitty rose tattooist. After I got my first big one, on my right shoulder, I thought well I can take the pain, what about another, this was due to the fact that I came out of the tattooist with a huge grin on my face, but at the same time I wanted more, not just due to the fact that I actually enjoyed the tattoo (apart from the pain) but I felt that a large tattoo on one arm and a small one on the other would not balance out right. This way of thinking has continued to the present day where I am just going to get my lower left arm finished sometime in the near future, I have already planned how to finish the corresponding part of my right arm so that they are not lopsided. I have heard other people that are heavily tattooed feel an itch on an area that makes them feel where they need to get another tattoo. I have never felt like that but I do feel I know where *the next one is going to be placed.perhaps it is subconscious?"*

This process of collecting and becoming a collector may be considered a form of what Van Gennep (1960) describes as a contagious rite of passage. This is based on the belief that natural or acquired characteristics are material and transmittable. Within the sub-culture, tattoos mark the individual as a member, and the more extreme, symbolic or complicated the tattoo, the higher the position in the hierarchy. However, there is one aspect closely related to the tattoo ritual or rite of passage, and that is the actual experience of being tattooed which involves physical pain and reportedly, pleasure.

Joanne: "When I am getting a tattoo done it is a very strange experience as to begin with you have pain, this pain diminishes as the tattooing continues. Not just of that tattoo you are getting done but as you get tattooed more you get used to the experience and it hurts less...the pain diminishes as the tattooing progresses. As I said, for me personally it gets to about a third of the way through and I start to actually enjoy the process and by two thirds of the way through I'm usually high as a kite. I think this is partially to do with the excitement of getting tattooed; you are actually getting something that you really want that really means something to you as an individual, and can show off later; it is also partially to do with the amount of endorphins that are pumping round my body. I said that it gets less painful, well this also depends on where you get the tattoo done, some places are more painful than others; for example the tattoos on my shoulder blades were really sore. This is due I think to the differences in skin thickness. The body is very strange, when I got the inside of my left arm done I was getting tattooed about 3-4 inches away from my armpit yet it felt that I was actually getting tattooed there. It felt that real I had to have a look to see what the hell the tattooist was doing; the body does some strange things to you when you get tattooed."

Developing a sense of loyalty

Whilst there is an intensely physical side to the experience which some report as 'addictive' commitment to a particular tattooist rests largely on a number of personal skills and the ability to make the experience enjoyable. These social skills, high information, commitment and involvement, and the quality of the work

combine to create loyal customers who tend to remain loyal over a period of time. However, possibly more important, they are 'walking' advertisements for the tattooist.

Simon aged 18 "Gash is the most experienced tattoo artist in the area. He has several competitors in our city.....and ironically they are all on the same street, isn't that funny, but, Gash is the most talented out of all the artists, so I highly recommend him.....Gash is the only person I trust to do my tattoo's. So far he has done 11 of my 12 tattoos, and he has even sparked my interest in doing tattoos myself. It is hard to find such a talented artist in these times...but they are out there, you just have to look."

Tattooists rarely resort to traditional means of advertising and communication. Their clients do it for them to a large extent. Prospective tattoo collectors talk to experienced tattooees and word of mouth is by far the most potent weapon with regard to recommendations.

James aged 30: "After being tattooed at Heads, I now realise how clean and good the last place I went was. I don't plan on ever going to Heads again and told Ian not to get his done there. Why would anyone recommend somewhere that isn't even that great? Clearly they didn't research the studios to find the best one. So here's my advice to anyone thinking about getting a tattoo, visit shops and look at work the tattooist has already done, and make sure the place is clean and professional."

Claire aged 26: "I got my first tattoo 3 years ago at the same studio, he is a great artist known both for his work and personality. I would definitely recommend him to anyone. More seriously though, I trusted Shane's judgement as an artist."

Reliability is also central to the relationship and becomes even more important if the tattoo is to be completed over a period of time. Failure to meet expectations can result in negative associations and condemnations, as the following illustrates.

Martin aged 33: "Almost a year had past since I first started my devil girl and the convention where I had got it started was soon to be upon us again. I still wanted E to finish what he started so I rang his shop to confirm an appointment for the Sunday of the convention. Their receptionist told me that he was only doing "first come first serve" and to get hold of him when he gets there. And that's what I did. I confirmed, what I hoped was to be, the appointment to finish my arm.....Sitting in the lobby before the convention I see E strolling in with bag in tow, I approached him, asking if we would be able to finally finish my arm. He gives me a yes and we set up our appointment for Sunday. So there I am, actually sitting in the chair, early Sunday morning, ready to get this tattoo finished, unbelievable, huh? . As you might assume, we were not as chatty as in the first sitting. I just sat there, waiting for the finished piece of art. But then the unexpected, he has to STOP. He has an important appointment to show up to and we'll have to finish another time. I thought you have to be kidding. A huge upper arm piece, lined shaded, and coloured everywhere but the head, the wings, and the shoes. I was steaming and had to leave the convention for fear of my sometimes short fused temper taking over.

A few months down the road I had my artist Vinz finish what E had started. Doing a better job might I add. A few months

after that I heard from people who asked E about my arm and why he acted like he did. The explanation he gave was that I called and made appointments at his shop a couple of times and then No-showed. It's sad that he can't even tell the truth, I'd really like to know. Actually, the really sad truth is I now sit here with a beautiful tattoo, a top notch piece of art. And all I can think about when I look at it now is should I get it lasered to lighten it up first before I get it covered up. I love the look of great work, I can't wait to have much, much more, but, in the end, what is great work if it's an asshole who put it on you. This experience has not deterred me from seeking other talented artists. It has opened my eye's though. Get to know your tattoo artist, it may take a while, but you'll thank yourself for it.

Reliability and customer interactions are vitally important as they emphasises the personal relationships that are created and then reinforced by the actual act of tattooing. In this case the association with the tattoo and the artist is so strong that the client felt compelled to have it removed, despite the fact that he considered it a 'beautiful tattoo' and a 'top notch piece of art'. This highlights the importance of customer interactions which are often valued over and above the actual art work that is being performed. This relationship is built heavily on trust, and once formed tends to be of an enduring nature resulting in recommendations and repeat visits as the canvas is developed and worked upon.

CONCLUSION

The rapid growth since the 1990s of tattoo culture which has brought a once perceived deviant activity into the mainstream, breaking down class, age and gender boundaries, raises some interesting questions for consumer researchers. To begin with, tattooing can now legitimately be classified as a service industry with clients and providers. However, the nature of this service is fairly unique due to the permanency of the act and the intimacy of the relationships involved. This relationship may also be of a long term and enduring nature and is dependent upon trust, confidence, liking, the ability to deliver an enjoyable experience and reliability. It is also closely linked to issues of identity, symbolic representation, and in some cases group membership. This paper has provided some exploratory factors which are largely mutually dependent, but would also benefit from a greater in-depth analysis in their own right. For example, the nature of exclusion and inclusion would make an interesting study and is open to a number of theoretical interrogations, as is the role of ritual in the process, particularly with regard to the changing nature of the contemporary 'consumer tribe'.

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New Clothing: Meanings and Practices

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores feelings, experiences and practices related to new clothing. Specifically, we seek to answer two main questions: What does constitute newness of a clothing item? What is the motivation for a new clothing purchase? The study utilizes qualitative research methods and draws upon data collected from 24 informants of different age, gender and cultural capital. The paper argues that unlike technologically oriented new products, symbolic meanings, motives and practices predominantly characterize new clothing consumption.

In the era of mass production and consumption, we experience multiplication of objects (Baudrillard 1998). Furniture, books, cars, clothes etc. are all produced in vast numbers and in new variants. In such a context what the consumers perceive as “new” and what kind of experiences and feelings new products render emerge as important questions to explore. Within the field of marketing, the concept of newness has received substantial research interest especially since the early 1960s. Over the years, the concepts of newness and innovation have been explored, the constituents of newness as perceived by consumers and producers have been analyzed and models have been proposed for predicting consumers’ behaviors in relation to new products.

We aim to contribute to the existing literature by examining meanings and practices related to consumption of a highly symbolic product category, clothing. We first offer a brief review of the literature on new products and innovations and explain the motivation behind our research. Next, we present data collection methods and discuss our findings. We conclude with a discussion of contributions and future research areas.

BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

The literature on new products and innovations can be grouped under two major categories: product level and consumer level studies. At the product level, research is primarily concerned with examining product-related factors affecting the acceptance of an innovation—an idea perceived as new by the individual (Rogers and Shoemaker 1971)- without taking into consideration behavioral and perceptual characteristics of the individual consumer. These studies propose continuums that classify new products in terms of how continuous or discontinuous their effects are on established consumption patterns and discuss product related factors that effect the adoption of new products, such as price and advertising (e.g., Firth and Narayanan 1996; Gobeli and Brown 1987; Kleinshmidt and Cooper 1991; Robertson 1971; Veryzer 1998).

At the individual level, studies focus on psychographic and demographic traits that make an individual more adept to adopt new products. Among psychographic traits innovativeness is the most discussed one in relation to new product adoption. Studies suggest that innovativeness is related to income and spending level (Baumgarten 1975; Goldsmith and Flynn 1992; Mason and Bellenger 1973-4) level of product involvement (Goldsmith et al. 1987; Mason and Bellenger 1973-4; Reynolds and Darden 1973, 1974; Schrank and Gilmore 1973) nature of the communicated product experience (Goldsmith and Flynn 1992; Mason and Bellenger 1973-4; Painter and Granzin 1976; Reynolds and Darden 1973, 1974), and perceptions of innovation attributes (Holak 1988; Holak and Lehmann 1990; Labay and Kinnear 1981). The literature demonstrates that early adopters have more education, more in-

come, and higher occupation status than non-adopters (Adcock, Hirschman and Goldstucker 1977; Bell 1963; Feldman and Armstrong 1975; Kegeries and Engel 1969; Labay and Kinnear 1981; Plummer 1971; Robertson 1971; Rogers and Shoemaker 1971; Rogers and Stanfield 1968). Innovators are reported to be more inner directed (McDonald and Jacobs 1992) and driven by sensation-seeking and uniqueness-seeking motives (Burns and Krampf 1992). Consumers are also classified based on the rapidity of their adoption; namely as innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (Rogers and Shoemaker 1971).

Despite the existence of a substantial amount of literature on new products and innovations, however, we believe that there remain two overlooked areas. First, most of the research focuses on technological innovations and tangible attributes of new products, leaving symbolic products and intangible attributes aside (for an exception see Hirschman 1982). As Hirschman (1982) argues, symbolism constitutes an important source of innovation, and by communicating new and different social meanings, a product can operate as a symbolic innovation. Second, while existing studies discuss demographic and psychographic traits that characterize innovativeness behavior in detail, they tend to neglect the actual experiences and practices of the consumers with new products.

Motivated by the gaps in the existing literature, this study offers an emic understanding of meanings and practices related to new product consumption in a symbolic product category, clothing. Two reasons underlie our selection of clothing category. First, clothing constitutes a signifying system through which meanings about class (Marx 1954; Veblen 1899); subcultural identity (Hebdige 1979), religion (Brown 2001; Crawley 1965b, Poll 1965; Sandikci and Ger 2001), sexual identity (Rolley 1992), gender roles (Crawley 1965a; Oakley 1981; Rouse 1989; Steele 1989), ethnic identity (Griebel 1995), and nationality (Ger and Ostergaard 1998) are communicated. Second, clothing, and in extension, fashion is characterized as ephemeral (Faurshou 1997; Fox-Genovese 1987). Clothes and fashion change continuously; the fashion industry always introduces new collections that aim to offer more allure and excitement to consumers.

METHODOLOGY

Given the exploratory nature of our study we adopted qualitative research methods, which are deemed more appropriate when the goal is to obtain in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). The study was conducted in Ankara, Turkey in the summer of 2002 with 24 Turkish respondents selected through purposeful/purposive sampling (Berg 1998; Patton 1990). The informants were recruited on the basis of their gender, age and cultural capital levels. The sample consisted of equal numbers of females and males and low and high cultural capital informants who were either within the ages of 20 to 35 or 35 to 65. In order to assess the cultural capital level of the informants we used a modified version of Holt’s formulation¹ (Holt 1998; also see Bourdieu 1984).

¹Holt’s (1998) cultural capital level assessment method was modified in order to make it relevant to the Turkish context. Unfortunately, space limitation prevents us to give a more detailed explanation of the sample selection process.

Data collection procedure involved three steps. The first two consisted of projective techniques and the last one involved semi-structured interviews. Projective techniques, such as collage making and metaphoric portraits, are based on the premise that when people attempt to understand a relatively ambiguous stimulus, their interpretation and response reveal their personality, feelings and socio-cultural experiences (Lindzey and Thorpe 1968). Such unstructured techniques help generate data that would be harder to obtain through more structured approaches. At the first stage of data collection, the informants were instructed to prepare collages of new clothing. All the informants were given a four magazine set and briefed about the task. In the next stage, the respondents were asked to associate new and old clothes with a color, taste, sound, feeling and emotion. Metaphoric portraits helped us understand the feelings and associations that our informants had in relation to new and old clothes. In the third stage, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted. During the interviews, the informants were first asked to describe their collages and then additional probing questions were administered. The length of the interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 1 hour and all were tape-recorded. The first author was responsible for all the stages of the data collection process and translation of the interview transcripts into English.

Our analysis sought to identify conceptual categories and themes, following the discovery oriented aims and procedures of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Each interview was read many times to gain a perspective of consumers' interpretations of and experiences with new clothes. Once themes and categories were identified and agreement among the authors was attained, we searched for similarities and differences between different groups of respondents. The patterns emerging from the data directed us toward theoretical constructs generated by previous research that may offer relevant insights into interpreting the patterns.

FINDINGS

In this section, we discuss two major groups of findings. First, we briefly analyze what constitutes "newness" in the clothing category. The data reveals that the meanings attached to new clothing derive from both tangible and intangible sources. Next, we discuss in detail the motivations behind new clothing consumption and consumers' experiences with them.

So what is new?

The newness of clothes derives from both tangible and intangible features. Unlike the emphasis given to the tangible attributes in the case of technologically oriented new products, however, intangible sources seem to play a more important role in consumers' assessment of newness of clothing items. Among the main tangible constituents of new clothing are the item's physical condition, technology and design. Physical condition refers to the material form of the item. If the garment is not torn, worn out and/or stained than it is considered as new. The informants also refer clothes that offer new technical benefits as new. One of the respondents, for example, regards an Adidas's t-shirt for bikers as a new product because it offers better protection from cold due to the cross-knitting technology used in its manufacturing. Apparels that are different in design are also perceived as new. Examples include Levi's engineered jeans, athletic shoes, and asymmetrically shaped tops and skirts.

We identify two intangible constituents of newness: social visibility and fashion. Social visibility refers to the extent the garment is seen by others. Irrespective of the purchase timing, a garment can still be regarded as new if it is not seen by socially significant others. As soon as a garment is worn to a social gathering, its newness erodes. However, the same garment can be

worn in the presence of another social group and still be viewed as new. Fashion trends also influence what is regarded as new clothing. The collages contain images of clothes and accessories that the informants think represent the fashion of 2002. As fashion trends change rapidly, items purchased recently may become "old" if the style turns out to be out-of-date quickly. Oppositely, previously purchased items that have become out of fashion can be perceived as new if the style becomes popular again.

Clothing as Celebration, Power and Play

In order to understand the dynamics of consumption of new clothes we also explored why people purchase new garments and how they experience them. Our analysis suggests that a new clothing purchase is motivated by a combination of utilitarian and symbolic reasons. As in the previous case, however, symbolic motives play a more important role than utilitarian motives. When existing garments are worn, torn and thus not wearable any longer, the consumer buys a new one. Yet, while such purely utilitarian purchase instances do happen, they constitute only a small set of the informants' new clothing purchase episodes. More often, the symbolic motives trigger purchase of a new garment. The purchase and consumption of new clothing contribute to moments of celebration, prompt feelings of power and status, and render excitement through exploration and play.

Celebration

Ritual artifacts often take the shape of consumer products—food, drinks, jewelry, diplomas, candles, ceremonial garments, etc. (Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Rook 1985). When used in a ritual context, such artifacts often communicate specific symbolic messages that are integral to the meaning of the total experience. Our data suggests that clothing is one of the ritual artifacts of celebrations. Irrespective of their gender, age and cultural capital level, all informants mention that they wear or wish to wear new clothes on special occasions. For the high cultural capital group these special occasions typically involve weddings, work parties, formal events of the clubs they are members of, birthdays of themselves and their relatives or friends, and new year celebrations. Low cultural capital informants, on the other hand, cite weddings, anniversaries and religious holidays as celebration occasions. In such symbolically significant occasions, grooming becomes very important and informants want to feel special by wearing new clothes. The new cloth worn signals the degree of importance given to the occasion:

"If it is a special night for me, if I am going to go for a meal ... I buy some nicer things. Instead of choosing among the existing ones, I prefer to wear something different and I buy. For example, my wedding anniversary is special to me. It has been 19 years and that day is always special. Birthdays are special and not forgotten, birthdays of the ones I love. ... I think I have to be very special at very special days."

(HCC, F, 42)

Religious holidays—bayram—constitute a major celebratory occasion for low cultural capital informants and, to a certain extent, for older high cultural capital respondents. Traditionally, it is customary to wear new clothes during religious holidays in Turkey. This custom continues among low cultural capital informants; they celebrate these days and, as much as they can afford, they prefer to wear new garments:

"I love to wear new clothes for bayram. New shoes, new handbag, all I just love it."

(LCC, F, 56)

“Bayram is of course an important day. One sure wants to wear new clothes. We continue our traditions.”

(LCC, M, 36)

Among older high cultural capital informants this custom tends to continue. These people reflect upon their childhood memories and remember the days that religious holidays were important rituals not occasions for holidays as they increasingly turn into nowadays. They try to continue the custom of wearing new clothes and expect their children and grandchildren to do so:

“I try to get well dressed for bayram. Both new and clean. Because bayram is a very special day. We still continue to do that within Turkish traditions. I pay attention to be well dressed I also expect my children to be so.”

(HCC, M, 62)

“I used to wear but in the last years I don’t really. Isn’t it something traditional to buy and wear something new during bayram? But for the past few years I can say that I do not. Still I care for my clothing at bayram. I do not wear something that I wear everyday but rather prefer something that I wear seldom, that I have not appeared in it to people a lot, or I buy something. I mean it still exists as a tradition.”

(HCC, F, 54)

The social significance of bayram and the custom of wearing new clothes, however, are largely lost among young high cultural capital informants. These respondents find the practice of wearing new clothes during bayram absurd and ridiculous. While they distance themselves from such traditional rituals, they, nonetheless, create new celebratory occasions, such as new year’s eve, Valentine’s day and birthdays, during which they get the chance to show off their new clothes. These findings support the suggestion that like most marketplace products, rituals are subject to life cycle forces (Rook 1985) and that while some rituals decline in popularity, new rituals emerge (Erikson 1977). However, the decline of the importance of a ritual does not occur evenly through all groups of the society. Furthermore, rituals that replace bayram, such as Valentine’s Day, highlight the effects of globalization.

Power and Status:

Clothing has long been associated with power and status. According to Marx (1954), fashion and clothing reflect the class relations within the society. Marx regards fashion and clothing as the most significant means through which social distinctions and inequalities among people are constructed, experienced and legitimized. Historical accounts document that, as early as the fourteenth century, clothes were used for the status competition among the nobility and the emerging bourgeoisie (Batterberry 1977; Hollander 1980; Konig 1973). As Veblen (1899) explained succinctly, clothes helped upper classes to distinguish themselves from the lower classes. Through excessive and obsolesce consumption of clothing, upper classes could symbolically establish their superiority over people of less means.

Our data suggests that not only the type of garment worn but also its newness signifies power and status. Independent of their age, gender and cultural capital our informants told us that they want to appear in new outfits in social occasions where they want to impress the group they will appear in. When attending to socially or professionally important meetings, it becomes almost embarrassing to show up with garments that were worn before. Not only people wear new clothes to impress other people, they also judge others by the clothes they wear in those occasions. It appears that the

ability to wear a new outfit for each meeting evinces one’s wealth, or pecuniary strength as Veblen (1899) has put it:

“... if there is a group that I want to impress. For, example, I go to a wedding, then something new. For example, if it is a wedding in Istanbul, not at an ordinary place, of someone I don’t really care. As I have said the place and the people are important.”

(HCC, F, 29)

“For instance my daughter is taking classes, when I go there I always get specially dressed. Because I represent my daughter there I want to leave a good impression.”

(LCC, M, 38)

“And also at business related important meeting days I wore my newest tie, shirt and suit. I wear my newest outfits, at special days for business and for me.”

(HCC, M, 28)

While all the informants mention that they prefer to wear new clothes when participating in activities that are important to them, the nature of such occasions differ along cultural capital level. For informants with high cultural capital formal business meetings and cocktails appear as important occasions. For those with low cultural capital, on the other hand, home visits are important. In these gatherings, it is important to show that they are of no worse situation than any other member of their social group. Furthermore, while both female and male informants express their will to wear different outfits to important occasions, females seem to need to purchase new clothes more frequently than men do. It seems plausible that two reasons underlie this. First, women’s fashion changes more frequently than men’s fashion. Thus, it requires women who want to appear fashionable in these social gatherings to shop more frequently than men do. Second, men can create variety with minor differences in their outfit, such as complementing their existing suit with a new tie or shirt. Such accessory changes and additions give more flexibility and remove the burden of purchasing a whole line of new clothes:

“There is a club that I am a member of. I need to wear something different at special occasions of that club. I mean not wearing the same thing all the time. I mean my jacket and trousers remain the same but I make purchases in terms of variety in accessories, ties.”

(HCC, M, 62)

Many informants explain that wearing different and new outfits to every meeting they attend is almost a requirement. In order to eliminate social embarrassment by not complying with this requirement, some even borrow clothes from friends or relatives:

“This generally happens if I have not shopped recently, if I do not have something new, if my clothes are seen by everybody and if I want to wear something new. It happens when I go out at night. I wear the things I like very frequently. I avoid wearing those that I think I have worn too frequently and I go and borrow from his [roommate’s] wardrobe.”

(HCC, M, 28)

Play and Exploration:

Gabriel and Lang (1995) argue that purchasing of a new product signals the start of a new phase of exploration, the explo-

ration of the owned object. Similarly, Holt (1995) discusses consuming as play. He maintains that the consumption object provides an interaction between consumers that has no ulterior end. The consumption object is essential for playing because it provides the materials through which playful interaction is enjoined. Our data suggests that there is a playful mode associated with new clothes. The excitement of bringing a new acquisition back from the shop, trying it on with other garments, showing it to friends and family members are important dimensions of experiencing new clothes. The feelings related to new clothes in the metaphoric portraits include excitement, happiness, joy, and curiosity. When the informant purchases a new cloth, a period of exploration begins. S/he shows the newly purchased garments to friends and family to get their opinions. Some wear the garment right away and begin experiencing what it has to offer. Others extend the exploratory phase and deliberately wait for a while until the item is fully personalized and ready to be worn.

Especially the female consumers tend to share their experiences of new clothes with each other. Such an interaction transforms new clothing consumption into a socializing act among females where experiential practices inform each other:

“Let me tell you about Banu. She likes fashion a lot. Her new clothing is the mostly discussed topic between us. She goes and dyes her hair into blonde, we decide on the color that goes best with her skin. It is fun actually. She has this habit. She buys lots of things and when I go to hers she shows them all. And we decide upon where to wear which items etc.”

(HCC, F, 30)

The fact that female informants enjoy both shopping for new clothes and talking to friends about them more than men supports the view that the interest in fashion and the pursuit of fashionability are perceived mainly as female characteristics (Sparke 1995; Thompson and Haytko 1997).

The purchase of new clothing also adds to the feelings of exploration and play through elimination of boredom and fatigue. Informants indicate that they give away their old clothes and buy new clothes when they get bored wearing the same item over and over again. The feelings associated with the old clothes in the metaphoric portraits include sorrow and unhappiness. In order to ease these negative feelings and evoke happiness, excitement, and joy again one has to purchase new clothes:

“When do I buy new clothes? When I got bored from the existing ones”

(HCC, M, 28)

“If it is worn out I give it to the cleaning lady or someone ... I give away the old fashioned ones or the ones that I got tired of seeing.”

(HCC, F, 52)

The feelings of boredom can be triggered as a result of peer group or family pressure. Even if the person himself or herself does not experience boredom from his/her cloth socially significant others such as spouses may get tired of seeing the same outfit and encourage him or her to wear something new:

“I give away his [her husband’s] suits very easily, ... I give away his shirts that I do not like on him anymore, that I got tired of seeing on him”

(HCC, F, 42)

“When I feel really lousy or when I want to make a change. Sometimes I stick to a cloth, my wife warns me about it, she says don’t wear it, wear something else. Then I change.”

(LCC, M, 39)

The frequency of purchase of new clothes, however, is related to economic capital. People feel freer to explore and purchase new garments when they can afford to do so. Informants who are economically well off present a rather blasé attitude (Simmel 1978) towards purchasing of new clothes. They believe that they work hard and earn the right to spoil themselves with new clothes. For informants with lesser financial means, an opposite case emerges. Among this group, frequent purchase of new garments is criticized and condemned. Since spending the limited budget of the family on clothing is not deemed appropriate, such excessive consumption behavior is typically disapproved. When confronted with such negative reactions, people may end up hiding the new outfits they purchase. One informant, for example, tells us that, she does not mention her new clothes to her husband; another states that she hides her new outfits from her mother-in-law with the fear that she will condemn her behavior and complain to her husband.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Scholars studying fashion point at the ephemeral nature of fashion (Faurshou 1997; Fox-Genovese 1987). Fashion in the capitalist era is characterized by novelty, rapid changes, proliferation of styles and mass consumption. Fashion changes continuously and new garments offer more allure and excitement (Wolf 1980). Furthermore, clothing and fashion operate as a major symbolic system through which meanings about identities and social relationships are constructed and communicated. The ephemeral and symbolic nature of clothing offers an interesting case to study meanings and experiences associated with new product consumption. The findings of this paper indicate that unlike technologically oriented new products, symbolic meanings, motives and practices predominantly characterize new clothing consumption.

Firat (1997) suggests that consumer’s motivation for consumption in the contemporary era stem from the symbolic meanings derived from the process rather than satisfaction of needs in the traditional sense. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) similarly argue that experiences and feelings of consumers have become more dominant and important aspects of consumption process. The results indicate that, in the case of new clothing consumption, symbolic meanings and experiences surpass utilitarian meanings and experiences. While physical condition and technological features of garments contribute to the newness of a garment, it is more often factors such as social visibility and fashion that determine whether an outfit is perceived as new or not by the consumer. Similarly, new clothing purchase is often triggered by symbolic motives such as celebration, power and status, and exploration rather than merely utilitarian reasons.

The findings of this study point to several future research areas. First, more research is needed to better understand how symbolic new products are experienced and consumed. Research on new music, literature and films is likely offer interesting insights to the existing literature on new products. Second, follow up studies on consumption of new clothing is needed. Due to the limited sample size and its exploratory nature our study offers only an initial understanding of the phenomena. While some differences along gender, age and cultural capital emerge, future studies need to investigate such variations more in depth. It is also likely that cross-cultural investigations will offer exciting insights, as our results indicate rituals and practices specific to a particular cultures’

motivations for the consumption of new clothes. Finally, future studies need to pay attention to the production side and the media. Exploring the perceptions of producers as well as the discourses in the media that shape what is fashionable and new can provide a more comprehensive understanding of new clothing consumption.

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“Let’s Make a Trip Together”: An Exploration into Decision Making within Groups of Friends

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an exploratory interpretative study of decision making within groups of friends. Eighteen groups were observed and interviewed while making leisure decisions. Emerging findings highlight the functions related to friend parties and their decision-making process. A conceptualisation with four major decision-making steps (i.e., suggestion, discussion and evaluation, organization, and post-experience evaluation) is suggested, which departs from traditional models such as the EKB model. Further, the major issues of conflict and role distribution are discussed. An original typology of groups of friends closes the paper.

INTRODUCTION

Group decision making has benefited from substantial consideration in many disciplines (social psychology, law, political sciences, etc.). In marketing and consumer behavior, many studies have been conducted on family decision making. The focus was first on couples (Davis and Rigaux 1974; Davis 1976; Green et al. 1983; Nichols and Snepenger 1988) while children were later included (Darley and Lim 1986; Howard and Madrigal 1990; Thornton, Shaw, and Williams 1997). Organizational buying behavior is another domain in which groups have been investigated as decision-making units (DMU’s; Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987; Webster and Wind 1972).

A group involves members who share something in common: “two or more persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences or is influenced by each other person” (Shaw 1976, p. 11). According to Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel (2001), groups may have a normative, a value-expressive, or an informative influence on decision making. Three dichotomies are suggested: primary versus secondary; formal versus informal; and aspirational versus dissociative groups. Primary groups are regarded as “a social aggregation that is sufficiently intimate to permit and facilitate unrestricted face-to-face interaction” (p. 397) and are characterized by a high level of cohesiveness. In contrast, secondary groups are more occasional, “more sporadic, less comprehensive, and less influential in shaping thought and behavior” (p. 397). Formal groups have a defined structure with (most often written) rules, a known list of members and requirements for membership, while informal groups have a looser structure and are likely to be based on friendship ties or common interests. Finally, aspirational groups refer to parties with which the individual aspires to associate by adopting its norms, values, and behavior whereas, in contrast, s/he will try to avoid any association with dissociative groups.

Group decisions may be defined as decisions “made by two or more individuals who have the inclination and ability to influence the outcome and who are subject to a constraint or constraints preventing them from making independent decisions” (Corfman 1987, pp. 229-230). A distinction can be made between three types of DMU’s for consumer goods and services: singles, families (couples with or without children), and friend parties. A lot of decision-making models incorporate friends as part of the social environment, which impacts on decisions and purchases in terms of information, norms, and socialization. As a reference group, friends exert a major influence on most aspects of consumer behavior and,

more particularly, on the decision-making process (DMP; Frenzen and Nakamoto 1993; Peter and Olson 1994). They provide information, reward or punish the decision maker for something s/he has done, and influence the decision maker’s values and self-concept. Those three classical roles of friends have been well documented. However, few studies have focused on the group of friends as a DMU in itself (how friends make decisions together; what are the major characteristics of friend DMU’s...). Gitelson and Kerstetter (1994) have considered the DMP of travel parties visiting friends and relatives and the particular influence of the latter on the decisions made during the vacation stay. In a sociocognitive study of group DMP’s among the members of a sorority, Ward and Reingen (1990) concluded that social structure influences individual cognitive structure. Finally, Campbell (1998) has investigated decision-making processes between friends from a gender perspective. However, those works do not focus on friends as a DMU.

The first goal of this paper is to fill this gap by exploring decision making among friends. A group of friends can be defined as a set of persons sharing a mutual feeling of affection or sympathy which is not based on blood ties, nor sexual appeal. This is in line with Price and Arnould’s (1999) definition of friendship as “a voluntary, personal relationship, typically providing intimacy and assistance, in which the two parties like each other and seek each other’s company” (p. 39). Similar to what has been done for families, the objective is to understand how decisions are made within the group of friends, which role(s) each group member plays, how conflicts are solved, etc.

Friend parties may be involved in two major decision domains. The first involves “inside” decisions which arise out of a need recognition by one or more members of the group. Those decisions may include convenience goods such as cigarettes or alcohol, durables such as a car or an apartment; but most decisions actually pertain to services and leisure activities: travel and vacation, restaurants, sport and cultural activities, evening or night out parties. In contrast, other decisions are triggered by “outsiders” which require the group to make a decision. Those “outside” decisions may include school tasks or activities related to youth movements, charities, or sororities. Of course, the DMP is not likely to be the same for those two types of decisions. This is why this paper will focus on the first decision domain (i.e., decisions involving a friend party held together spontaneously and not externally controlled) and, more particularly, on leisure decisions. Friend parties indeed represent large markets for the travel, movie or catering industries.

METHODOLOGY

A naturalistic interpretative approach (Erlandson et al. 1993) seems to be the best option to explore the DMP of friend parties in all its complexity. It avoids some drawbacks of both survey and experimentation methods when studying group processes (see Chebat 1983; Kim and Lee 1997). The study was carried out in two parts. First, the actual vacation DMP of three groups of friends has been followed for a whole year in the framework of a broader project on vacation decision making (Decrop, 1999). They were interviewed in depth three times before and once after the summer

TABLE 1
Major Characteristics of the Interviewed Friend DMU's

	Group Size	Age	Gender	Family situation*	Decision domains
1.	2	25-50	F	S	Vacation, trips, sport, culture, scouting
2.	4-6	25-50	M	S+MNC	Vacation, going out
3.	6	<25	M/F	C	Vacation, going out
4.	4-6	>50	M/F	MC+MNC	Vacation, restaurants
5.	4	>50	M/F	MC+MNC	Restaurants, trips
6.	13-14	25-50	M/F	S	Charities, going out
7.	4	<25	F	S	Sport, going out, vacation, apartment
8.	3-4	25-50	F	MC	Cultural activities, trips, vacation, restaurants
9.	12	25-50	M/F	S+C	Trips, going out, restaurants, sport
10.	6	>50	M/F	MC	Trips, restaurants
11.	5+	<25	M/F	S	Going out, trips, scouting
12.	7	25-50	M/F	S+MC	Role play, going out, restaurants
13.	4	<25	F	S	Vacation, going out, school works
14.	4-12	25-50	M/F	S+MC	Trips, restaurants, cultural activities
15.	10	25-50	M/F	MC	Restaurants, going out
16.	3-6	<25	M	S	Going out, games
17..	6+	25-50	M	S+C	Going out, restaurants, vacation
18..	4	<25	M	S	Going out, vacation

*Legend: S=single; C=non married couple; MC=married with children; MNC: married without children

vacation. The second study focused on the DMP of friend parties as such. Although different types of decisions were evoked, leisure decisions were investigated in more depth. Friend parties were interviewed (most members participating) and observed in their natural settings: while gathering for a talk or a drink, or during activities inside and outside their favorite meeting places. This second study involved 15 DMU's with 42 participants. Informants were French-speaking Belgians and showed varied socio-demographic profiles such as illustrated by Table 1.

In those two studies, informants were recruited according to theoretical sampling, which means looking for cases likely to yield rich and varied information in order to maximize theory development (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The analysis and interpretation of the interview and observation transcripts was based on thematic inductive analysis. Categories, patterns, and propositions emerged from systematically coding, memoing and diagramming the data (Miles and Huberman 1984).

EMERGING FINDINGS

Functions of groups of friends

Different functions may be related to groups of friends. Data analysis and interpretation reveal one generic function, social integration, and three specific functions: having fun ("fun and play"), sharing opinions and emotions ("sit and talk") and experiencing new things ("see and learn"). Of course, there is no boundary between those three functions which often come across together and have an important influence on decision making.

First and foremost, groups of friends play a major *socialisation and integration role*. For many informants, friends are vital and the best way to live a valuable social life. Having no friends is seen as a void such as illustrated by the following quotation:

Hugues (M, 28, mechanist): You know, my friends are really important; my life wouldn't be the same without my friends.

You see, I know some guys who have no friends so to say, you see, guys who only live for their couple, things like that, and I believe that they really miss something...

This aspiration after friends can be connected with Maslow's (1970) social needs of companionship, belonging and love. Being part of society is important for most consumers and friendship clearly helps this.

Fun and play. In many situations, the group is seen as a source of relaxation and pleasure. Having fun and playing enhance the affective nature of the relationships on which most groups of friends are grounded. Sharing similar hobbies and passions, living new and varied experiences, and feeling big thrills are leading motives. This hedonistic function is typical for younger groups of friends and is in line with the experiential nature of the leisure activities in which friends are involved (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982).

Sit and talk. The group is considered as the best place for sharing positive emotions or confessing problems and disillusion. In three older groups of friends without children, the group even acts as a surrogate family. Those highly cohesive groups with a longer "history" are characterized by a need to relive the relationship they experienced before or they would have lived within a family. The group clearly serves an affective function which tends to be authentic and disinterested, such as explained by this retired woman: "What we are looking for... That's friendship, brotherhood, exchange... As we don't have any children, we like to see other people and, if possible, people who have children and little children."

See and learn. A last emerging function is to acquire knowledge, to discover and learn new things. The group of friends fulfills a more cognitive and utilitarian role: there is a well-defined benefit in participating in group relationships and (most of the time cultural) activities. The simple pleasure of being together is not enough. This function is more relevant for adult and opportunistic (see later) groups of friends.

The previous functions are much in line with Saint Arnaud's (1974) early typology of interpersonal relationships of warmth, cooperative and heuristic relationships. The warmth relationship can be connected with the "sit and talk" function. People strike up a friendship in order to satisfy their need to love and to be loved. The cooperative relationship pertains to individuals looking in others for a specific ability/skill, which will allow them to change their environment. Group members strive to enhance their knowledge and cognitive arousal. The more flexible nature of the group of friends prevents them from being caught in a structure which is too patronizing such as their family. This is much in line with the "see and learn" function described above. Finally, groups of friends may be bonded by a heuristic relationship, which bolsters discovery and newness. In this type of relationship, individuals try to understand the deep meaning of their own experience, the experience of their selves or of their environment, which may be related to the "fun and play" function.

The process of group decision making

The process of decision making among friends is quite complex and varies a lot from one group to the other and from one situation to the other. Therefore, it is almost impossible to come to an overall scheme with isolated and structured decision-making variables. However, a few typical steps emerge from the data analysis.

Suggestion is the first typical step: someone suggests an idea or an activity and submits it to the group through a phone call or as soon as the group meets. It should be noted that all members do not need to be present at this stage. It often happens that the initial suggestion spreads all over the DMU through the grapevine: A informs B, who informs C and so on. Daydreaming and fantasies prove to be important in friend decision making, especially at the outset of projects. The first ideas often pertain to dreamt activities or ideal vacation destinations that are spontaneously elicited without considering potential inhibitors.

The second step is much more complex as it involves *discussing the initial suggestion and finding a solution* that suits most group members. Each member reacts to the proposition either by a direct agreement, by reminding of particular constraints, or by proposing amendments to the proposition. Sometimes, the decision is made very quickly whereas in other cases, a longer time elapses between the first discussion and the final decision as each member reflects on the proposition, and considers individual contingencies (such as time and money resources) before making a final decision:

Ludivine (F, 22, student): Well overall, when we decide about something, be it an evening out or skiing, it doesn't take a lot of time. Someone launches an idea and we use to discuss it during four hours; but sometimes it's hard. We speak about it and if everyone is ready for it, we meet again after... [...] Yes, then everyone thinks about it apart and gives his decision. And after that, it goes quickly. A more concrete idea has just been put on the table and we try to implement the project with those who are interested...

While groups of friends tend to be optimistic and idealistic in the first discussions and evaluations (they are still daydreaming), they become more realistic over time as the commitment to choice grows. This is in line with Mansfeld's (1994) adaptation of Rodman's (1963) value stretch model. Plans are moving from a preference or ideal level (dream) to an expectation level (reality) as the time period before the activity shortens. Sometimes, expected decision aspects are even replaced by second-rate choices (but not under a certain tolerance level) or spare solutions. The intervention of contextual factors is the major reason for this shift: contextual

facilitators (e.g., time resources) are first considered while contextual inhibitors (e.g., money) are taken into account later (Um 1990). As it will be discussed in the next section, conflicts often occur at this stage because it is seldom possible to conciliate all members' wishes and constraints (budget, timing). Finding a solution that suits most members is the critical stage of the DMP, such as illustrated by the following example:

Jacqueline (F, 49, teacher): [...] That's sometimes complicated: the dates, there are some people for whom it doesn't fit... There is also the financial issue because not everybody likes to spend a lot of money in travel. So, finally, when all those conditions are met, eh... That's ok but it's not always obvious... It's not always easy to come to an agreement.

Once decisions are made, the roles in *organizing the activity* are distributed, most of the time according to a well-established scheme. Lesser involved members use to delegate most tasks to one or more members who act on behalf of the others. Information search is not very extended in the groups of friends of this sample. It is limited to finding relevant information about alternative solutions for the suggested idea or activity. Most often, only involves the person who came up with the initial suggestion or the organizer(s).

After the activity, members *evaluate its performance*. At this point, a distinction should be made between the evaluation of the consumed product or service, on one hand, and the evaluation of the group process, on the other hand. This second dimension seems to prevail over the first one: many groups keep meeting again, sometimes on a regular basis, although they are dissatisfied with some activity choices. Again, friendship appears to be stronger than the individual satisfaction and dissatisfaction of group members.

Of course, suggestion, evaluation and organization stages often intermingle and do not always follow the same sequence. Scheidel and Cromwell (1964) already contended that group interactions do not fit a linear sequence. Very often, a member suggests an idea and the other members agree or disagree with it. They also extend or revise it in such a way that the initial idea is modified over time. When the idea reaches its ultimate state, it looks like a summary of all the agreements and amendments generated during the discussion. In conclusion, decision making in groups of friends departs from traditional models such as the EKB model (Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell 1973). Differences may be explained by two major factors: interpersonal constraints within the DMU and the affective basis of most groups of friends.

Conflict and consensus in friend parties

The members of a given friend DMU may have very different backgrounds resulting in different motives, expectations, and preferences. Moreover, group life, intimacy and promiscuity are sources of tension. In many decision situations, those personal and interpersonal constraints do not matter that much and a general *consensus* emerges quite easily after the initial suggestion. No extensive discussion is needed even though some members have to sacrifice some of their wants and wishes. Participating in the group is more important than the particular alternative that will be chosen. This may be related to altruism and "groupthink" (Janis 1983). One consistent finding about groups is that group consensus changes individuals' opinions and preferences (Moscovici 1985): "when a group is cohesive and in strong agreement about a decision, the opinions and preferences of the individuals in the group change to conform more to the preferences of the group as a whole. The members are so committed to the group that they use it as a basis for their own opinions, suspending their own critical thinking in favor

of the group's opinions [...]. And because individuals value their membership in the group and feel a strong sense of commitment, they conform quite easily" (Ellis and Fisher 1994, p. 28). So groupthink may lead to more extreme or poorer decisions because members suspend their critical faculties in favor of consensus. The group is more concerned with agreement and consensus than with the quality of the decision to make. This finding is confirmed by a lot of data chunks.

However, other decision-making situations are punctuated with conflicts, which may leave (sometimes enduring) marks on the group structure and on future decision making. From the data, a distinction can be made between two types of conflicts as whether they involve structural or organizational problems. First, *structural conflicts* are triggered by factors external to the friend party. Being part of several DMU's at the same time leads to conflictual situations. The informal structure of the group of friends may be confronted with a more formal structure, which leads to "orientation problems" (Bales and Strodtbeck 1951). Most of the time, this type of conflicts is solved by adapting the formal norms to fit the informal nature of the group of friends. For example, a group of friends once decided to participate in a scouting staff. This institutional type of group involves rigid rules (i.e., planning and organizing activities for the children, looking for places for the camps, keeping accounts for the group...) which depart from the group of friends' informal norms (having fun, sharing emotions, learning new things...). In this case, the conflict was solved by the staff members holding their preparation meetings in a bar. Structural conflicts also occur because statuses and roles may differ in the two types of groups. For example, Madeleine avoids her friends to become members of her social association because this would mean that she should command them, which could lead to conflicts. Again, this is an example of a norm or value conflict between fun, pleasure, friendliness on the one hand and rigor, order and discipline on the other hand. Value conflicts arise when the DMU members show fundamental differences in their goals resulting from different personality traits, product involvement, values, definitions and motives (Kirchler 1995).

Second, *organizational conflicts* occur when members are not happy about the way group activities take place. Following Kirchler (1995), one could speak about preference conflicts: members share the same motives and involvement in the decision domain but have different assessments about the attributes and alternatives involved in the choice. Distribution conflicts also occur when the costs and benefits are perceived to be distributed unequally across the members of the DMU. Some friends complain that they do not or are not likely to benefit from activity choices as much as other members. Those distribution conflicts may be related to equity theory in social psychology (Oliver and Swan 1989; van Raaij and Francken 1984). If unresolved, a distribution conflict may result in dissatisfaction.

Because conflicts lead to unstable situations, strategies are developed in order to solve them and to come to a final decision. Three major strategies are emerging from the data analysis and interpretation: avoidance, negotiation and vote. *Avoidance* means that group members strive to avoid any conflict in order to save friendship ties. If the suggestion does not fit some members, the project is directly abandoned or those members willingly leave the group decision process. The initial project will not be revised. Delegation (letting another person decide for oneself) is another important phenomenon related to the avoidance of conflicts. *Negotiation* is a more complex strategy, which happens more frequently in the observed groups. After the project has been submitted to the group, each member gives his/her opinions and constraints, and negotiations take place in order to try to conciliate the different

views. The objective is not to come to the best possible decision but to an acceptable solution for everyone ("one sees if it suits everyone"). The initial project sometimes undergoes significant changes as far as new suggestions are made, and constraints are acknowledged. There is a shift from an optimizing rule to a satisfying one. Each member makes some effort in order to come to a compromised solution and tries to please others while defending his/her own interests ("give and take"). In a few cases, divergent opinions and preferences cannot be reconciled through negotiation. The group then comes to *vote* to make a final decision.

The use of a particular strategy appears to be a function of factors such as the group size and cohesiveness, the involvement of the members in the decision process, the constraints that need to be considered, or the expected consequences of the decision. However, nine of the interviewed groups use to negotiate when making decisions.

Role distribution

The distribution of roles within the DMU is an important aspect of group decision making. All classical roles involved in group decision making (i.e., initiator, influencer, decider, buyer and user) can be found in friends' DMU's. However, in most cases, the distribution of roles is limited to a dichotomy: the organizer and the participants. One person, the organizer, combines the roles of initiator, decider, buyer and practical organizer while the other members of the group satisfy themselves with participating:

Marcel (M, 65, retired): No, everything goes very well, suggestions are made which are appreciated or not [by the group members]. But it's very good to get comments because often, there are things we haven't thought about... Pay attention that not everybody decides; only those who have responsibilities or are more interested take actually part. There are never really big conflicts, I would say. Yes, because everybody knows what he must do, we know how it works. People who are more involved care for everything and the others are happy with this...

Again, for most members, choosing the activity is not as important as being together. Usually the organizer is the member who is the most involved in the decision domain (e.g., someone who is fond on travel) and/or in sustaining friendship ties. S/he is also called the "driving force" of the decisions by the informants themselves. In contrast with families, there is no traditional role distribution due to generational or gender differences. The organizer could be paralleled with a kind of leader of the group. However, leadership is not connected with dictatorship as the member who is considered as the leader does not make all decisions alone and often denies his/her leading status in order to respect group norms. S/he bolsters the whole DMP and avoids the group breaking up. This is not far from Ellis and Fisher's (1994) identification of four functions related to the leader of a group: advancing the purpose of the group, inspiring greater activity among members, administrating procedural matters, and building group cohesiveness. The leader is not a person who imposes his/her opinions and preferences on the group but someone who acts as a mediator or a gatekeeper in order to make sure that plans become concrete (that dreams become reality) and that the solution suits everyone, as illustrated by the following quote:

Hugues (M, 28, mechanist): Well, there is never someone who imposes his decision because it must suit everybody. You see, we discuss in such a way that we are sure that it fits everybody,

that it pleases everybody, otherwise it doesn't work. I mean, if there were someone in the band saying: "tonight, we do that, that way" and all that, we would laugh at him because, well, your friend party, that's not a question of dictatorship but of pleasing everybody. There are some concessions from everybody. Yes, concessions, or people who trust the opinion of two or three members of the group and who agree in doing whatever we do. But you never have a guy who manages the group, oh no...

EMERGING TYPOLOGY OF GROUPS OF FRIENDS AS DMU'S

To summarize this paper, a empirical distinction between three types of structures is proposed: the surrogate family, the experiential band and the opportunistic group. *The surrogate family* is the most conventional group type because it is characterized by a set of norms and habits firmly anchored in the group, which both help defining the group itself and its friendship ties, and influence the DMP. Those norms give a structure to the group's life and an orientation to the group's decisions. This type of group involving older consumers proves to be more formal and more stable. Cohesiveness is high as members do know each other very well, the role(s) they have to play and the way the group works. Rituals are developed to enter the group: one has to prove others that one is deserving friendship and worth incorporating the group ("groupworthy"). In one group, the term "little trainee" is even used to qualify a new member who "has to prove himself" before becoming a full member, as if there were a trial period.

The experiential band is a more circumstantial type of group, where norms and rules are changing according to circumstances and situations (e.g., the decision domain at hand or the members who are involved in the decision process). Being together to have fun and living strong experiences is the prevailing drive of that type of groups. As a consequence, decision roles and strategies may vary whereas there is no compromise about the basic norms related to friendship. Friendship ties are strong and the socio-affective relationship is of paramount importance, even though, as contrasted with traditional groups, they are not enough to give the group a stable structure. This is the most frequent type of groups in this study.

In contrast with the two first types, there is no fixed set of roles and norms in the *opportunistic group*, which makes this third type a more precarious and less stable type of group. Sometimes members even find it hard to justify the roots of the group's ties. Although friendship lies at the core of the group, friends play a second role in comparison with the partner or the family, or with the decisions and the activity to make. Therefore, group cohesiveness is weaker: togetherness is limited to people gathering at one place in space and time because of a common interest. The group serves a more utilitarian than affective function. As a result, activity choices may prevail over being together, which is in contrast with the two previous group types.

CONCLUSION: GROUPS OF FRIENDS, A SPECIAL CASE

It has already been stressed that groups of friends are usual DMU's for particular products and services such as leisure activities. Groups of friends are typical because they are based on informal friendship ties, which are less stringent than love and blood ties. Moreover, any member of a group of friends is simultaneously involved in other DMU types. As a result, group decision making in the friend parties of this sample dramatically differs from group decision making in their families. First, most decisions

involve all members of the friend party and not a subgroup of it; these are syncretic or joint (as opposed to autonomic) decisions. Second, communication tends to be less extensive. The observed groups of friends do not gather on such a regular basis as their family does, which makes decision making (i.e., sharing ideas, information, making plans) not so "easy." Decision timing and the predictability of choices are affected as well. Moreover, personal and situational factors may strongly vary within the DMU, making it very troublesome to find compromising solutions. Problems of conflicting time schedules, budgets or interests may lead to very late decisions and to the emergence of a leader who takes the bull by the horns and triggers major decisions. This does not imply that the other members are not consulted before final decisions are reached, but in the end, the leader makes choices on behalf of the group. In contrast with family DMU's, unilateral decision making does not result in frustration and angry moods for two major reasons. First, friends are just willing to sacrifice all their wishes for letting someone else organize things and do all the work for them (i.e., they delegate the organization). Second, individual preferences are upset as for most informants belonging to the group is the major objective. The content of the activity (e.g., vacation) is far less relevant:

Patrick (M, 45, attorney): Well every year, it is a group boss who decides: "I would like to take you there, does that interest you?" In general, we say yes even though it is a place where we did not think of going. I would even say, it's, it's because we would not go individually that we accept to go in group because the work is done, thus that's it. For example, I would not willingly go to Scotland even though all the good things they say about it... well about the weather etc. ...about the sights.

Michèle (F, 43, employee): It is actually due to the weather [laugh].

Patrick: But since the group is going to Scotland, it is the opportunity to go to Scotland, well there you go.

This finding indicates that it is not wise to predict choice on the basis of individual preferences as far as groups of friends are concerned. "Groupthink" (Janis 1983) may lead members to revise their individual preferences in order to keep friendship ties alive.

Decision making in groups of friends is far from being effective in the sense that the group fulfills tasks in order to achieve well-defined objectives. Decision making often lasts long and timing is difficult. Moreover, a lot of plans are abandoned or postponed due to a lack of involvement or resources (time, money or material conditions). Many collective fantasies come across: members dream of plans but when they have to act, they suddenly become aware of several constraints which lead them to leave or change plans. However it should be reminded that achieving some specific goal is not the only group objective. An equally (and sometimes even more) important objective is to maintain or strengthen the group itself. Cartwright and Zander (1968) give a few examples of the functions related to group maintenance: keeping interpersonal relations pleasant, arbitrating disputes, providing encouragement, giving the minority a chance to be heard, stimulating self-direction or increasing the interdependence among members. Groups of friends first strive to preserve the affective ties between members. The paramount objective is to meet again and to spend a nice time together whatever the decisions taken. This perspective explains why the DMP's, distribution of roles and decision strategies are simplified. There is a major difference between formal and informal groups: a formal structure such as a family needs efficiency and

productivity (optimal decisions) to justify its existence whereas in an informal structure such as a friend party, group cohesiveness prevails and satisfying decisions are enough.

This research has explored the way groups of friends make decisions together. Friends prove to be major players in a broad range of decisions. In a lot of cases, friends act as a reference group which may help triggering a DMP, such as illustrated by this young woman: "I did not plan to go, but after talking to my friends, they told me 'listen, make an effort, ask your parents for some money, do something, leave a few days.'" But sometimes friends serve more than information and social comparison purposes; they act as a DMU in itself, which has been neglected by the literature so far. Of course, this research has just scratched the surface of a fascinating iceberg. This exploratory study of decision making within groups of friends calls for other studies. More particular decision-making aspects should be investigated, such as decision strategies, influence tactics, the distribution of roles,... In addition, it would be worthwhile to look into the interconnectedness of different decision levels, including personal and interpersonal factors, individual and group preferences/decisions,... (Ariely and Levav 2000).

From a managerial point of view, a good understanding of decision making by groups of friends is of the utmost importance. Indeed, a good knowledge of who does what in the group and of how the group evolves toward a decision is helpful for marketing strategy and especially for positioning and communicating products that specifically target parties of friends.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Bliss is Ignorance? Emotion, Evaluation, and the Feeling Brain

Stacy Wood, University of South Carolina

SESSION OVERVIEW:

“Given the ubiquity of feelings, one would have thought that their science would have been elucidated long ago—what feelings are, how they work, what they mean—but that is hardly the case. Of all the mental phenomena we can describe, feelings and their essential ingredients—pain and pleasure—are the least understood in biological and specifically neurobiological terms.” (p.3)

Antonio Damasio

Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain

Consumer behavior is not the only field to experience a recent and fast-growing interest in the nature and influence of emotions. For decades, neuroscience regarded emotions and feelings as intangibles beyond the range of empirical investigation. Neuroscientists might study the sensory processes of vision or the cognitive patterns of memory, but emotions remained elusive. However, as new research explicates the role of emotions as biologically-driven survival and advancement mechanisms, the fields of neurobiology and consumer behavior intersect in the following questions: How does emotion impact choice? And, more importantly, is the impact of emotion beneficial or detrimental to the choices made?

“Emotions provide a natural means for the brain and mind to evaluate the environment within and around the organism, and respond accordingly and adaptively. Indeed, in many circumstances, we actually evaluate consciously the objects that cause emotions, in the proper sense of the term “evaluate.” We process not only the presence of an object but its relation to others and its connection to the past. In those circumstances the apparatus of emotions naturally evaluates, and the apparatus of the conscious mind thinkingly coevaluates.” (Damasio, p. 54)

This idea of the adaptive integration of hot and cold processing is not reflective of historical consumption views. As Bakamitsos and Lee note in their paper, “happy processors” have been labeled as mindless, distracted, or operating under reduced resources. Consumers’ naïve theories of choice frequently resonate with the “mindless” categorization; one often hears individuals state that they struggle to “make logical, not emotional choices,” make optimal choices by ignoring “short term feelings,” and that poor choices were made “in the heat of the moment.” Bakamitsos and Lee offer here evidence that counters this assumption of positive affect’s negative consequences. They show that observed persuasion phenomena—previously taken to be evidence of mindless processing—is instead indicative of increased mindful processing.

“Among these emotions/feelings, I accord special importance to those that are associated with the future outcome of actions, because they come to signal a prediction of the future, an anticipation of the consequences of actions. This is a good example, incidentally, of how nature’s juxtapositions generate complexity, of how putting together the right parts produces more than their sum. Emotions and feelings have no crystal ball to see the future. Deployed in the right context, however, they become harbingers of what may be good or bad in the near or distant future.” (Damasio, p. 147)

If we assume, then, that emotion is inextricably intertwined with evaluative processes and, given new evidence, that the influence of emotions is not necessarily negative, we must still address the perception of emotion over time, speaking specifically of prediction and recall. Emotions are dynamic and, as Wood and Bettman note here, especially prone to temporal biases of perception. One robust bias (with wide-ranging consumption implications) is *durability bias*, the tendency to overestimate the duration of emotions experienced in conjunction with future events. As adaptive processors, it is curious that human experience does not debunk the myth of extended emotional duration. In their paper, Wood and Bettman offer an explanation based on norm-congruent recall of emotion—an explanation that fits with current neurobiological studies of emotions and social behavior. Sexual arousal is an affective state commonly used to describe the primary “pleasure versus pain” basis of positive and negative emotion, yet it also clearly has learned social and normative components. In their paper, Ariely and Loewenstein address the interplay of biological and learned feeling head-on. They examine the influence of high and low arousal on prediction of future preferences and choices (which are likely, one assumes, to be enacted in a state of high arousal). Their findings suggest that preferences may be state-dependent, therefore resulting in mispredictions of future actions.

In conclusion, we must note that the question, “Do emotions lead to better decisions?” is not simply answered. Emotions may increase certain kinds of information processing and may provide important information about physical states, desires, and preferences. However emotions themselves are difficult to predict, perhaps because they are difficult to recall. Is this a bad thing? If emotion-seeking is a powerful motivator, perhaps it is good that we overestimate our happiness at successes and our sadness at failures. (Dissertations might never be finished if we didn’t overestimate our anticipated joy at seeing our advisors sign off.) In the final analysis, we must consider both the strengths and weaknesses of our feeling brain.

“Predicting Happiness: Social Norms and the Durability of Durability Bias”

Stacy L. Wood, University of South Carolina

James R. Bettman, Duke University

Affective forecasts guide many consumption decisions, large and small (Baron, 1992; Kahneman & Snell, 1990). In a broad sense, people strive to achieve those objects and events that they think will make them happy. However, people are poor affective forecasters; they frequently overestimate how long they will feel good after a future positive event (e.g., winning the lottery, getting tenure). This phenomenon, called durability bias, has been well-established in extant social psychology research (Wilson, Gilbert, & Centerbar, 2003). Our current research investigates the role of social norms in affective forecasts. Consideration of the influence of social norms provides insight into why individuals do not learn—as they grow in life experiences—that emotions rarely last as long as expected and thus do not alter their subsequent predictions of emotional longevity accordingly. The idea of culturally-mandated expectations of emotion is not new. Hochschild (1983) refers to these expectations as *feeling rules*, defining them as social norms that prescribe how a person should feel in the event of a specific occurrence. Social norms may also influence the overt demonstra-

tion of the expected emotion. Cultures not only influence norms for experiencing emotions (Eid & Diener, 2001), but also norms for expressing them (Frijda & Mesquita, 1995). If an individual is motivated to convey to a social audience that he or she is feeling a certain emotion, then the individual will be likely to engage in emotion-consistent behaviors (Schlenker, 1992).

Thus, prediction and, more importantly, recall of emotion duration may be tied to expected or enacted behaviors appropriate to the event. Wilson et al. (2001) suggest that another reason for people's failure to learn about the short-lived nature of emotional reactions is that they forget that their reaction was shorter than expected after an event. Why might people forget? The intensity of emotions is often difficult to recall with a high degree of accuracy. Retrospective accounts of emotion are particularly prone to bias (Dube & Morgan, 1996; Hsee & Abelson, 1991). If direct emotional judgments are relatively inaccessible in memory, people may rely on memories of behavior if they are relatively more accessible and diagnostic (Lynch, Marmorstein, & Weigold, 1988). That is, in order to judge the emotional impact of a past event, one may rely on memory for behaviors ensuing from the event (e.g., I must have been miserable, I didn't go to work for a week). In addition, if recall of behaviors is encouraged prior to making a retrospective judgment of experienced emotion, the judgment should be more norm-congruent than if recall of behaviors follows making the retrospective judgment (because we expect behaviors to be more salient and easily recalled than the individual's feelings).

Two studies were conducted to test the influence of norms on durability bias using participants involved in a real consumption experience. In Study 1, participants were university students attending the university's home football games who participated at three points in time over the course of an eight week period. We sought a natural environment in which opposing norms might be simultaneously tested. We manipulated social norms for the "true fan" advocating high excitement or low excitement. Each of these two norms was communicated to a subset of the participants; in addition, there was a control group to whom no norm was communicated. Predicted feelings about the outcome of the game and the duration of those feelings, actual feelings and their duration, and retrospectively recalled feelings and their duration were measured. As hypothesized, norms for high celebration led to a longer predicted duration and longer recalled duration than norms for low celebration, but there were no differences in actual duration. In Study 2, participants were university students (at a different university) participating in a camp-out for the chance to get season basketball tickets. The university's basketball team has been historically dominant, however, the current year's team was not expected to be as successful as the previous seasons. Some participants were exposed to a normative statement about a "true fan" always being "really excited" about season tickets even for a "non-championship" year and some participants were exposed to a counter statement that a "true fan" would only be "really excited" about season tickets in a championship year. Further, there was a control condition in which no normative statement was included. Further, when later asked to recall feelings about getting tickets, half the participants were asked to recall their behaviors before recalling emotion duration and half were asked to recall their behaviors after recalling duration. Again as predicted, the average duration prediction was longer in the "be excited" norm. There was also a significant interaction in recalled duration judgments between the norm and behavior-listing conditions ($F(1,17)=30.68$, $p<.001$, one-tailed) in which recalling behaviors first led those participants who thought they should be excited to recall longer (more norm-congruent) durations.

Taken together, the results suggest that people continue to mispredict how happy future positive events will make them because of errors in recalling past happiness and that these recall errors are influenced by recall of norm-congruent behaviors.

"Are Happy People Mindless or Mindful Processors of Information?"

Yiorgos A. Bakamitsos, Dartmouth College

Angela Y. Lee, Northwestern University

One of the claims that had a significant influence in the domain of affect research is that people in a positive mood tend to process information in a superficial, heuristic manner rather than systematically. The origin for this claim seems to stem from research on the effects of affect on memory. According to research findings previously reported, positive mood activates other positive materials in memory. Such activation of materials is thought to consume cognitive resources and thus pose a capacity constraint on the individual's ability to process information. In an attempt to shed light on the effect of affective states on information processing, Mackie and Worth presented findings to support the claim that positive mood tends to decrease systematic processing of information and increase reliance on peripheral cues in decision making, and proposed a resource allocation explanation to account for these findings (Bless, Mackie and Schwarz 1992; Mackie and Worth 1989).

Although these findings seem to provide evidence that positive mood impairs individuals' ability to allocate cognitive resources, they fail to account for other findings reported in the literature that do not support the notion of "happy but absent-minded people". For example, it has been demonstrated that individuals in a positive mood are able to outperform those in a neutral mood in creativity tasks (Isen, Daubman and Nowicki 1987), categorization, and free recall (Lee and Sternthal 1999), suggesting that positive mood leads to enhanced relational processing. Furthermore, findings reported by Bless et al. (1996) provide evidence that contradicts the capacity deficit claim. Specifically, Bless and his colleagues asked research participants who were in either a happy, neutral or sad mood to read two stories that were familiar to them, and at the same time perform a secondary task that was a standardized test for measuring concentration. Their findings indicate that respondents in a positive mood were more likely to rely on schematic information in a recognition task to identify whether items presented to them were part of the stories they heard earlier; however, they also outperformed participants in the other mood states in the secondary task. If positive mood were to impair resource allocation and thus result in greater use of scripts, it should also negatively impact on respondents' ability to perform the secondary task. The authors suggest that, by relying on the use of scripts, respondents in a positive mood might have been able to free-up cognitive resources, which they allocated to the benefit of the secondary task.

Based on these findings one may argue that positive mood does not impair individuals' cognitive capacity, rather, it seems to enhance relational processing and prompts strategic allocation of cognitive resources. Thus, one plausible explanation for positive mood participants not discriminating between strong versus weak arguments may be the result of their being persuaded by arguments that they generate rather than by arguments provided. That is, if people in a positive mood are more likely to engage in relational elaboration, they would be generating more thoughts that in turn affect their attitude. If this is true, then the judgment rendered by positive mood respondents may not reflect simply the outcome of the evaluation of information provided to them by the experimenters, but also arguments that they generated. The notion that positive

mood participants may be accessing and using additional information that they generate runs afoul of the theorizing that positive mood reduces the amount of cognitive resources that people have available in rendering judgments, thus resulting in heuristic processing.

The objective of the present research is to determine if those in a positive mood may be persuaded by their own arguments. The results of Study 1 provide support for the notion that happy people may be supplementing the weak arguments by their own thoughts. In particular, while all participants generated more additional support arguments in the weak vs. strong argument strength condition, those in positive mood generated more support arguments than their neutral mood counterparts. Study 2 is currently underway to further test the hypothesis that happy people may be persuaded by arguments that they generate rather than rely on reasons provided in the message, hence their judgment may not reflect the strength of the arguments in the message.

“The Heat of the Moment: The Effect of Sexual Arousal on Sexual Decision Making”

Dan Ariely, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
George Loewenstein, *Carnegie Mellon University*

The sex drive is a vitally important motivational force in human behavior, both from the perspective of the individual and society. Yet there has been surprisingly little research examining the effect of activation of the sex drive on judgment and decision making. In this paper we examine the effect of high levels of sexual arousal in young male adults on two aspects of judgment and choice: (1) what types of stimuli and activities are regarded as sexually attractive, and (2) the measures one is willing to take, and risks one is willing to incur, to obtain sexual gratification.

During the experiment subjects were given a laptop computer, and were asked to answer a series of questions. The notebook computer was controlled by a small handheld keypad with a number of color-coded keys. The keypad and the program that administered the questions were designed so they could be operated easily with the non-dominant hand. In the control treatment, subjects answered these questions while in their natural state. In the arousal treatment, subjects were first asked to self-stimulate themselves (masturbate), and once they achieved a high level of arousal, they were presented with the same questions as the subjects in the control treatment.

The questions asked by the computer included two modules that were designed to address the two issues mentioned earlier (attractiveness of different stimuli / activities and willingness to take risk to obtain sexual gratification). The set of questions that asked subjects to evaluate the attractiveness of different stimuli and activities included questions about the attractiveness of: women's shoes, a 12-year-old girl, an animal, a 40, 50 and 60 year old woman, a man, an extremely fat person, someone you hated, a threesome including a man, a woman who was sweating, cigarette smoke, getting tied up by your sexual partner, tying up your sexual partner, a woman urinating, getting spanked by a woman, spanking a woman, anal sex, contacts with animals, having sex with the lights on, and reactions to “just” kissing. The set of questions that asked subjects to assess their own willingness to take measures to have sex included questions about the likelihood of their: encouraging a date to drink, slipping her a drug, taking her to a fancy restaurant, telling her you loved her, and trying to have sex even when the date says “no.” Other items elicited the respondent's self-reported likelihood of using birth control and of the likelihood of negative consequences if one failed to do so.

The results showed that under high arousal individuals found a variety of sexual related activities to be more attractive (aside

from “just kissing” which was rated as more frustrating and less fun). Overall we asked respondents to react to 21 questions. All 21 questions were in the expected direction but not all of them were individually statistically significant. Of these questions, 17 questions were statistically significant, 2 questions (would you participate in a threesome and is the smell of cigarette smoke arousing) were marginally significant, and 2 questions (would it be fun to watch an attractive woman urinating and do you prefer to have sex with the light on?) were not significant. A one-sample sign test for these differences revealed a highly significant effect ($p < 0.001$), indicating that overall arousal fundamentally changes predicted enjoyment and liking for different sexual related activities. Arousal also had a strong influence on the reported probability to engage in a set of behaviors that are not morally desirable but can increase the likelihood of sexual encounter. In this set of questions all five individual questions were statistically significant. Finally, the results for the questions regarding the tendency to use and not to use birth control are not as clear-cut as in the other cases. At least for some questions there were no differences between the aroused and non-aroused subjects. These questions included their understanding of the method of pulling out before ejaculating, their understanding that even a friend can transmit STDs, trusting someone they have just met, and allocating the responsibility for both controls to women. It is clear that sexual education has had an impact even at a state of arousal. Yet, when answering the four questions about condoms, the aroused and non-aroused subjects answered very differently. For all four condom related questions, subjects in the aroused condition indicated a lower likelihood to use condom compared with subjects in the non-aroused condition.

In summary these results provide additional evidence that decisions about preferences, health, safety and morality are largely influenced by the emotional state of the consumer, and moreover that when they are not in this state consumers cannot predict their own preferences and attitudes.

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See How 'Good' We Are: The Dangers of Using Corporate Social Activities in Communication Campaigns

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an increasingly popular concept. More companies than ever engage in CSR activities (e.g., socially responsible employment, see Drumwright, 1994). Recent research in marketing, however, shows that communicating about CSR activities does not necessarily result in positive effects for companies (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). In addition, many studies clearly report that perceived socially irresponsible corporate activities lead to negative perceptions of the company and its products (e.g., Brown and Dacin, 1997). Lastly, it seems that companies that are doing the most in the area of CSR are also the ones that are criticized the most whereas the ones that are not doing anything are the least criticized (*SEE Newsletter*, 2001). As a result companies—promoting themselves as socially responsible—need to know how detrimental to their business accusations of irresponsible behaviors will be.

Hypotheses

Communicating about CSR activities is likely to create higher expectations with regard to the company's social involvement. It was therefore hypothesized that customers—learning that the company has committed socially irresponsible acts—would experience a strong 'negative surprise' (i.e., surprise followed by negative emotions) and, as a result, would react even more negatively than if the company had not promoted itself as a socially responsible company (see Vanhamme and Snelders 2003). More precisely—after accusations of irresponsible acts—deterioration with respect to the perceptions of the company and its products, trust in the company and purchase intentions were hypothesized to be larger for companies promoting themselves as socially responsible than for companies not using this element in their communication campaigns (H1). It was also hypothesized that surprise would have a direct and indirect influence (via its amplification of negative affective reactions) on these 'deterioration' variables (H2).

Methodology

The hypotheses were tested via a 2 (pre/post measure vs. post measure only) by 2 (CSR vs. NO CSR) design. Two out of the four conditions involved a measure of dependent variables (i.e., company and product perceptions, purchase intentions, and trust in the company) *before and after* respondents read a newspaper article accusing the company of committing irresponsible acts. In one of the two conditions, respondents read—before the newspaper article—a company's public relations (PR) press release mentioning several CSR activities whereas no information about CSR activities was mentioned in the other condition. The last two conditions replicated the first two conditions but measures of the dependent variables were only collected *once; after* the negative information about the company's irresponsible acts (i.e., newspaper article). 244 respondents were randomly assigned to the four conditions.

Results

The analysis of the results showed that the respondents who read the PR press release with CSR elements had a more positive perception of the company and a higher score for credibility and integrity (i.e., trust) than the respondents who read the PR press release without CSR elements.

Moreover—after the respondents read the newspaper article with the negative CSR-related information—scores for the perceptions of the company and its products, purchase intentions, credibility and integrity were significantly lower in all four conditions.

In addition—after the negative CSR-related information—no significant difference was found with respect to the perceptions of the company and its products, purchase intentions, and credibility scores between respondents who read the description with CSR elements and those who read the description without CSR elements. Integrity, however, was significantly lower for the former group of respondents.

Lastly, as expected, the *deteriorations* (difference between the pre-measure and the post-measure) with respect to 'company perception', and 'integrity' were larger for respondents who received the PR press release with CSR elements.

Results for the mediation analysis further showed that fear and disgust partially mediated the influence of surprise on the deterioration of the company and product perceptions; anger, disgust and fear partially mediated the influence of surprise on the deterioration of purchase intentions; and anger and fear partially mediated the influence of surprise on the deterioration of integrity. Moreover, the direct influence of surprise on the deterioration of the company perception, purchase intentions and integrity seemed to be systematically stronger for the respondents who received the PR press release with CSR elements than the others.

Conclusions

The results of our study show that companies promoting themselves as socially responsible are perceived more positively and trusted (integrity and credibility) more. However, it also highlights that the more positive perception and increased trust disappear if the company is accused of behaving non socially. For trust, the result even show that—after customers have been exposed to the negative information—they seem to trust (integrity dimension) companies promoting themselves as socially responsible even less than companies not using CSR elements in their communication campaigns.

The present research also emphasizes that surprise seems to play a role with respect to the factors underlying the stronger deterioration encountered for companies promoting themselves as socially responsible. However, these stronger deteriorations could alternatively be explained by a contrast effect (Sherif and Hovland, 1961): when a company overtly promotes itself as socially responsible, it creates a more positive context than when it does not mention its CSR activities. As a result, negative information about the company's alleged irresponsible acts comes across as more discrepant with the context in the former case and may thus result in more negative judgments (contrast effect) than in the latter case.

It is worth noting that our results are subject to some limitations. Besides the limitations related to the scenario method, other limitations are the type and number of CSR elements used in the press release and journal article. Furthermore, this study only considered high quality products and a fictitious company. Eventually, the type of sources may also limit the external validity of our results (sources that are perceived as more objective might lead to a different pattern of results). Lastly respondents' reactions and perceptions were measured just before and then right after the

accusation of irresponsible acts. A real longitudinal study could better highlight how consumers' reactions evolve as time goes on.

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Customers or Sellers? The Role of Persuasion Knowledge in Customer Referral

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Word of mouth and customer referral have become veritable buzzwords in the world of business, as illustrated by popular management books on these topics (e.g., Godin 2000, Rosen 2000, Silverman 2001). "Word of mouth promotion has become an increasingly potent force, capable of catapulting products from obscurity into runaway commercial success" (Dye, 2000, p.139). Increasingly, marketers attempt to stimulate and accelerate word of mouth, a practice known as buzz marketing (Rosen, 2000). Academics have long recognized the importance of word of mouth (e.g., Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955, Dichter, 1966, Herr, Kardes & Kim, 1991, Duhan et al., 1997, Gilly et al, 1998), and several recent papers address the issue of referral management (Buttle 1998, Biyalogorsky, Gerstner and Libai 2001). There is, however, little research into the effectiveness of referral management strategies at the consumer level (see Verlegh, Peters and Pruyn, 2003 for an exception).

The present study attempts to fill this gap, investigating whether marketers' use of financial incentives to stimulate customer referral triggers a "change of meaning", so that consumers perceive the referral as a persuasion attempt in stead of friendly peer-to-peer advice (cf., Friestad and Wright 1994). This change of meaning is likely to diminish the impact of the word of mouth. Whether or not this change of meaning occurs, depends on various factors. Campbell and Kirmani (2000) propose that consumers use of persuasion knowledge is determined by the accessibility of ulterior motives, such as the motive to persuade or make a profit. Accessibility of ulterior motives increases when consumers are faced with a situation, person or tactic that is strongly associated with persuasion. In the present study, we examine accessibility of ulterior motives as a function of the source and content of word-of-mouth. We extend earlier work by looking at the impact of "buzz marketing" tactics which are used to stimulate referral.

We conducted two experiments. The first investigated how the accessibility of ulterior motives is affected by the source and content of word-of-mouth. We hypothesize that accessibility of ulterior motives is higher for salespersons than for friends, and that consumers' evaluations of the source become less favorable when ulterior motives are inferred (cf., Campbell and Kirmani, 2000). We also examine whether ulterior motives are more accessible when the persuader's behavior is congruent with the persuader's self-interest (i.e., maximizing profit) rather than the consumer's interests (cf., Vonk 1998).

For experiment one, 106 student participants filled out a questionnaire containing a brief scenario about the purchase of a second hand car, in which they were advised by a second person. Source and content of the advice were constructed according to 3 x 2 design. Source was manipulated at three levels, i.e., non-commercial (knowledgeable friend), commercial (salesperson at the car store), and ambiguous (friend with a weekend-job at this store). The source recommended either the least or the most expensive alternative. Participants listed the thoughts evoked by the scenario, and rated the source's likeability and the extent to which the source was perceived to act out of self-interest on multi-item scales.

We found that perceived self-interest varied between sources. The commercial source (salesperson) was rated highest on self-

interest, and the non-commercial source (friend) was rated lowest. The commercial source also evoked the largest proportion of thoughts related to self-interest, and rated lowest on likeability. We found a significant interaction between source and advice for source likeability and for self-interest: for commercial and ambiguous sources, we find that perceptions of self-interest are highest when they advise to buy the most expensive car. As expected, the results for liking display a reversed pattern. It is noteworthy that the effects are largest for the ambiguous source. Apparently, consumers rely more heavily on the perceived behavior when their perceptions of the source are ambiguous. Perceptions of the noncommercial source (friend) are not affected by the nature of his advice.

Marketers often use financial or other incentives to stimulate word of mouth (cf., Godin 2000). In experiment two, we examine how this affects the accessibility of ulterior motives. We examine source evaluations and perceived ulterior motives for noncommercial sources that have strong and weak ties with a consumer. We expect that strong tie sources are perceived as more sincere, and less driven by ulterior motives. In experiment two, 243 consumers filled out a questionnaire containing a brief scenario about word of mouth on providers of mobile telephone services. The sample was composed of friends and families of student assistants, and consisted of 49 % females, with ages varying between 18 and 67 (median=30). A 3 x 2 design was used to construct the scenarios: Three levels of accessibility of ulterior motives were created by altering the behavior of the referring consumer. Tie strength was varied at two levels (friend vs. stranger). We collected valenced thought listings, and measures of trial intent for the provider, perceived sincerity of the source, and the extent to which the source was perceived to have ulterior motives.

We find significant effects of tie strength and accessibility of ulterior motives. The perceived strength of source's ulterior motives decreases with social tie strength, and increases with the accessibility of ulterior motives. Inversely, perceived sincerity of the source increases with tie strength, and decreases with the accessibility of ulterior motives. We also find an interaction of tie strength and accessibility of ulterior motives: an increase in tie strength reduces the impact of accessibility of ulterior motives on consumers' perceptions of the source and their responses to the referral.

Experiment one showed that the accessibility of ulterior motives is affected jointly by the source and content of referral. Experiment two showed that increased accessibility of ulterior motives decreases the impact of word-of-mouth recommendations, and has a negative impact on the perceived sincerity of the recommending peer. These effects are moderated by the strength of the social ties between source and receiver of word of mouth. These experiments illustrate the importance of persuasion knowledge in word-of-mouth, but more research is needed to better understand cognitive and affective processes involved (cf., Hamilton 2003).

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Who Are You and Why Are You Being Nice?: Investigating the Industry Effect on Consumer Reaction to Corporate Societal Marketing Efforts

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ABSTRACT

Corporations are turning to all forms of corporate societal marketing programs to help build, and in some cases, repair their brand images. Past research suggests that the cause-related marketing programs have both potential dangers and rewards for the firms. This paper investigates how consumers evaluate different types of cause-related marketing efforts in five different industries. The results suggest that the harmful nature of the firm's products and production methods may influence the consumers' evaluation of their cause-related marketing efforts.

Corporate Societal Marketing (CSM) programs¹ are becoming extremely popular because corporate leaders believe that it is good business to be viewed as a socially responsible company (Business in the Community 2001). For the most part, these leaders are correct. A 2001 Cone/Roper report found that 80% of Americans believe that companies have an obligation to support good causes, and 81% said that, when price and quality are equal, they would switch brands to support a cause (Oldenburg 2001). However, past research suggests that, while CSM may be effective in improving brand equity and increasing market share, there are limits to the effectiveness of these initiatives. First, supporting the Cone/Roper findings, researchers found that consumers are not willing to forgo better quality products or lower prices in order to support a cause (Barone, Miyazaki, and Taylor 2000; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Brown and Dacin 1997). For example, Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) found that corporate social initiatives adversely affected purchase intentions if consumers perceived that the company would forgo product quality in order to be socially responsible. Secondly, Strahilevitz and Olsen (1998) showed that donations to charity are more effective in influencing the purchase decisions for frivolous rather than practical products. Thirdly, Webb and Mohr (1998) showed that consumers can be skeptical of corporate cause-related marketing efforts, which can have a negative impact on the corporation and its brands. Finally, Pracejus and Olsen (2004) found that the "fit" between the cause and the corporation was important. In their studies, they found that consumers were willing to pay more for products/services that were tied to causes that were somehow related to each other versus products/services that were tied to unrelated causes. However, despite this willingness to pay more, there was no impact on short-term sales.

While researchers agree that choosing the "right" cause is important to a successful corporate-cause partnership, we know little in terms of what constitutes a good fit. Hoeffler and Keller (2002) suggest that causes that are relevant to the consumers and similar to the corporation would be better at building brand equity. However, researchers have not fully addressed the issue of what makes a good fit for different types of firms. The purpose of this paper is to further the investigation of corporate-cause "fit" by investigating how perceptions of an industry influence the evaluation of four different types of CSM campaigns. Results from a preliminary study suggest that industry effects do exist in consum-

ers' evaluations of corporate societal initiatives and should be considered in future research.

The Role of Motives

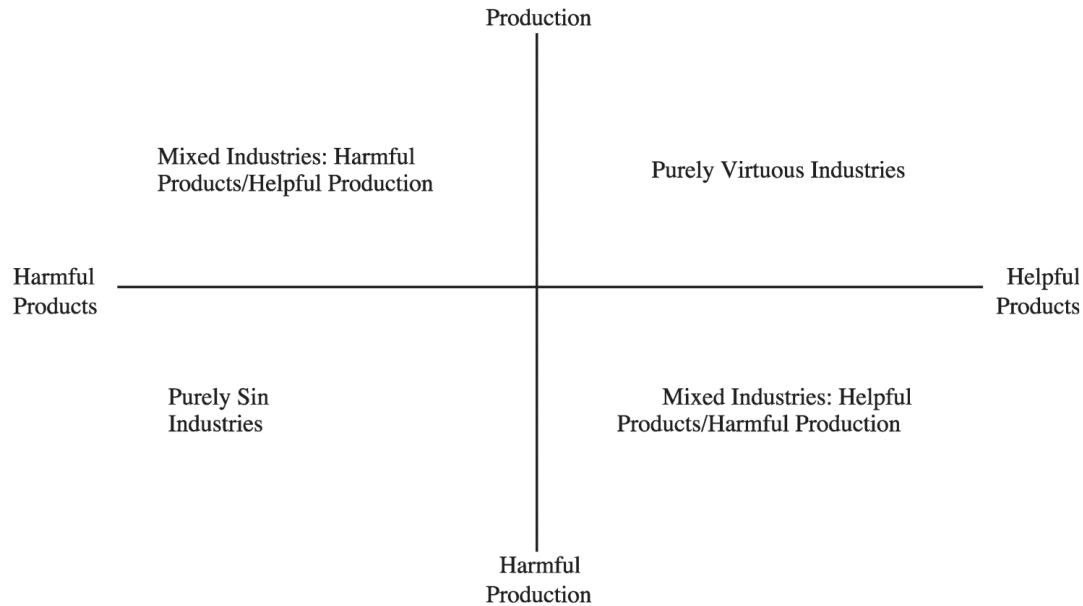
In general, studies have shown that consumers are skeptical of corporations, and will make inferences about the benefits a firm hopes to gain from their marketing efforts (Kirmani and Wright, 1989; Kirmani, 1990; Campbell and Kirmani, 2000). Essentially, past research suggests that corporate actions more obviously tied to profits would trigger consumers' persuasion knowledge, leading them to discount/discredit the action. For example, when a firm runs an ad, consumers would immediately recognize it as an attempt to sell a product and would utilize their existing persuasion knowledge to process the ad accordingly.

In the case of CSM campaigns, we can expect consumers to also infer motives. However, depending on the nature of the CSM program, the intent of the corporation may not be as obvious to the consumer. This is particularly true if the benefits to the corporation are not apparent or conflicts with what the consumer already believes about a specific firm or industry. This may be particularly true for a CSM effort that would hurt a company's profits if it were successful. In these situations, consumers may become suspicious of the underlying motives of the corporation. This suspicion would trigger an attribution process where the consumer attempts to uncover the underlying ulterior motive of the firm that would make sense to them. Since firms exist to make a profit, consumers may spend considerable energy in an attempt to infer motives related to the profit-oriented goals. While these attributions do not necessarily have to be distrustful in nature, they do typically result in a less favorable evaluation of the firm (Fein et al., 1990; Vonk, 1998, 1999). For instance, consumers may be suspicious of a tobacco company that undertakes a campaign to prevent underage smoking because, if successful, the campaign would hurt cigarette sales. In this case, consumers' suspicions may lead them to infer motives that would actually protect the company's financial position such as trying to improve their image to sell more cigarettes to adult smokers or perhaps an attempt to protect themselves from potential lawsuits connected to underage smokers. This would lead to a less favorable attitude toward the partnership. However, if a tobacco company undertook a CSM campaign that would sustain their business (such as advocating against child labor in the planting and harvesting of tobacco) consumers may be able to infer profit motives more easily and then have a more favorable attitude toward the partnership. This would prevent suspicion and may actually result in a more positive evaluation. This suggests that, under some situations, consumer attitudes towards the company may be more positive if profit motives were more obvious. Since the overall attitude toward the partnership, and ultimately the firm, may suffer from certain corporate-cause connections, corporations need to be aware of the types of CSM campaigns that would more likely trigger suspicion in their target market.

Moreover, Ellen, Mohr and Webb (2002) have shown that it may not be necessary for companies to be perceived as purely altruistic in their CSM efforts. In fact, when corporate profit opportunities were obvious, consumers had more positive evaluations of the cause-related offer. This suggests that it is acceptable for at least some organizations to be more profit-driven, even when they are undertaking a CSM effort.

¹The term corporate societal marketing is used to include all different types of corporate social initiatives. See Drumwright and Murphy (2001) for an explanation of the different varieties of corporate societal marketing efforts.

EXHIBIT 1



This leads to the following proposition:

- P1: CSM campaigns that trigger less suspicion will be viewed more positively than CSM campaigns that trigger more suspicion.

The Corporation

Another aspect that may cause suspicion with consumers is the amount of harm that a company has already done, either because of unsafe products or harmful production practices. Consumers may be more suspicious of CSM efforts for firms in industries known to be harmful. For example, alcohol and tobacco companies routinely meet resistance from consumers when they undertake socially-oriented campaigns aimed at mitigating the effects of their products (Hoeffler and Keller 2002). Likewise, oil companies may encounter similar resistance if they undertook an environmentally related cause in order to overcome harmful production practices.

While the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright 1994) posits that consumers use their existing knowledge structures about corporations when evaluating marketing actions taken by firms, many consumers have limited knowledge about specific firms in various industries. However, this does not mean that consumers do not make attributions about a firm's motives; instead, it implies that consumers use very broad, general industry information when inferring motives about specific firms. For instance, while a person may know nothing about a specific pharmaceutical manufacturer, they may still make attributions about why a firm donates free medication to inner city clinics based on what he/she know about the pharmaceutical industry. Therefore, when categorizing industries, two very general dimensions were used—the harmful nature of the products and the harmful nature of the production methods. Exhibit 1 shows the classification of firms on these two dimensions. Firms in Quadrant I are perceived to be included in the virtuous industries that produce helpful products in a way that is considered helpful to society. Consumers would view firms in Quadrant III as members of sin industries who produce

harmful products and harm society in production. Quadrant II and IV contain firms that belong to industries that have mixed perceptions; either the products or production of these products are perceived to be helpful to society.

These classifications of industries may affect how consumers react to various CSM efforts. Specifically, virtuous firms, those that are perceived as already helping society in both their products and the production of these products, are already considered to be good corporate citizens who would probably not raise suspicion in anything they pursue. Firms that operate in sin industries may not be as fortunate since consumers may be suspicious of *any* societal efforts the firm attempts to undertake. Firms that operate in mixed industries may or may not be met with suspicion, depending on which sort of societal effort they undertook. This leads to the following proposition:

- P2: Consumers will infer less society-serving motives and more self-serving motives for corporate societal marketing programs undertaken by firms that operate in mixed or sin industries.

The corporate societal marketing programs

The types of CSM campaigns were classified based on how easily consumers could infer profit-driven motives. Based on an evaluation of the types of campaigns typically undertaken, four classifications were created:

- (1) *Positively tied to product sales.* This would include all CSM campaigns that would increase sales of the company's product if successful. Profit-driven motives would be the easiest to infer with this type of campaign. For example, a credit card company that donates a certain amount to a charity based on each time their card is used.
- (2) *Negatively tied to product sales.* This category would include all campaigns that would actually decrease sales of a

product if it were successful. Profit-driven motives are less obvious with this category, making it harder for consumers to infer them. For example, a beer manufacturer sponsors a campaign that discourages underage drinking.

(3) *Not directly tied to sales but aimed at sustaining the company's business.* Campaigns in this category would include those that are not directly tied to a company's sales, but are strategic in that they sustain the business in some way. Profit-driven motives would be fairly easy to infer with these campaigns, although not as obvious as those that are positively tied to sales. For example, a lumber company that invests in reforestation programs or a clothing manufacturer that partners with child labor advocacy groups to eliminate the use of child labor in their factories located in developing countries would all be classified as sustaining a company's business.

(4) *Completely unrelated.* There are a number of corporate cause-related marketing programs that are not associated with a company's core business at all. Profit-driven motives may be more difficult to infer with this category than with others. For example, a firm that donates computers to local schools would be classified as unrelated for all firms that do not manufacture or sell computers.

Depending on the industry involved, these different types of CSM efforts may be met with skepticism and suspicion, which could eventually have a negative effect on the firm. This leads to the following proposition:

P3: Consumers will evaluate the various CSM campaigns differently based on which industry was involved. These differences will appear in both overall attitudes as well as the nature of the inferred motives.

METHOD

In order to test differences in the evaluation of corporate societal marketing initiatives, a 4 x 5 between subject design was used. Four industries were selected to represent each quadrant shown in Exhibit 1 and one industry was chosen to serve as a baseline case that was perceived to be average on harmful products and production. To identify which industries fit the quadrants, pretests were conducted.

Pretest

One hundred students collected pretest data in exchange for course credit. During a brief semester break, each student was given the opportunity to administer six to twelve questionnaires in exchange for course credit. Using a seven point scale, participants rated 15 different industries on the harmfulness of the industry's products as well as the harmfulness of the production of these products. Five industries were identified as being different on the two dimensions. Pretest results are presented in Table 1.² In addition, participants were asked to evaluate the typical companies

in each industry on their concern for protecting the well-being of their customers and their concern about having a positive impact on society (1=not at all concerned, 7=extremely concerned). These two questions were averaged to obtain the positive impact scale reported in Table 1 ($\alpha=.8219$). It should be noted that all the industries tested were perceived to be somewhat harmful in the production of their products. The pharmaceutical industry was viewed as one of the least harmful even though their mean was fairly moderate. However, given that this industry was rated as the one most concerned about having a positive impact, it was chosen to represent the virtuous industries in Quadrant I.

Experiment

Four scenarios were developed for each industry, each representing one of the classifications of CSM efforts described earlier. These scenarios appear in the Appendix. Once again, one hundred students administered questionnaires in exchange for course credit. The data collection followed the same procedure described in the pretest. Each subject read one scenario and answered a series of questions. Overall attitude toward the partnership was measured using a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (extremely unfavorable) to 7 (extremely favorable). Inferred motives were measured using a modified version of the inferred motive scale developed by Szykman, Bloom and Blazing (2004). This scale measures motives by asking participants to describe reasons for the partnership using a seven point scale anchored by pure/unpure (RS), selfish/selfless, caring/uncaring (RS), society-serving/self-serving (RS), uninvolved/involved, proactive/reactive (RS). A principal components factor analysis was performed to confirm the unidimensionality of the scale. Based on the scree plot as well as the eigenvalues >1, a one factor solution was confirmed ($\alpha=.8315$). Importance of the cause to the company's customers was also measured using a seven point scale ranging from 1 (extremely unimportant) to 7 (extremely important). Finally, demographic information was collected.

To test whether the different cause-related marketing campaigns were evaluated differently based on the industry; the following regression equation was used:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Attitude}_{\text{Partnership}} = & a + b_1 \text{Tob} + b_2 \text{Brew} + b_3 \text{Pharm} + b_4 \text{Gas} \\ & + b_5 \text{PosSales} + b_6 \text{NegSales} + b_7 \text{Sustain} + \\ & b_8 \text{PosSales} * \text{Tob} + b_9 \text{PosSales} * \text{Brew} + \\ & b_{10} \text{PosSales} * \text{Pharm} + b_{11} \text{PosSales} * \text{Gas} \\ & + b_{12} \text{NegSales} * \text{Tob} + b_{13} \text{NegSales} * \text{Brew} \\ & + b_{14} \text{NegSales} * \text{Pharm} + \\ & b_{15} \text{NegSales} * \text{Gas} + b_{16} \text{Sustain} * \text{Tob} + \\ & b_{17} \text{Sustain} * \text{Brew} + b_{18} \text{Sustain} * \text{Pharm} + \\ & b_{19} \text{Sustain} * \text{Gas} + \text{Importance} + \text{Age} + \\ & \text{Gender} + \text{Education} \end{aligned}$$

Where: $\text{Attitude}_{\text{Partnership}}$ = Attitude toward the partnership described in the scenario;

Tob, Brew, Pharm, Gas = Industry identifiers—1 if the identified industry was included in the scenario, 0 otherwise;

PosSales, NegSales, Sustain = CSM initiative identifiers—1 if the identified CSM initiative was included in the scenario, 0 otherwise (for example, if the CSM effort described in the scenario was positively linked to the corporation's sales, then PosSales=1);

PosSales*Tob...Sustain*Gas = Interaction terms between the industries and the type of CSM campaigns. These were included to determine if participants did evaluate the different types of CSM campaigns differently based on the industry included in the scenario.

Importance = the participant's evaluation of whether the cause was important to the corporation's customers.

²Each industry was compared to each other using one-way ANOVAs and Scheffe Post-hoc tests. All five industries were different from each other in the harmful nature of their products $p < .05$. However, according to the Scheffe tests, brewers were not different from either pharmaceuticals or fast food in their production methods (brewers=4.04, pharmaceuticals=4.25, $p < .733$; brewers=4.25, fast food=3.72, $p < .273$).

TABLE 1
Pretest Means

Industry	Product	Production	Positive Impact Scale	Classification
Tobacco	1.83 (n=313)	3.08 (n=315)	1.97 (n=461)	Purely Sin
Oil/Gas	4.92 (n=229)	2.58 (n=226)	3.74 (n=232)	Mixed
Pharmaceuticals	5.92 (n=234)	4.25 (n=232)	5.03 (n=232)	Purely Virtuous
Brewers	3.91 (n=228)	4.04 (n=225)	3.49 (n=235)	Mixed
Fast Food	3.29 (n=23)	3.72 (n=237)	3.24 (n=230)	Base case: neither overly helpful or harmful

Age, Gender, Education=these demographic variables were included as control variables (Gender=1 of male, 0 otherwise).

A similar regression equation was utilized to investigate differences in the motives inferred by the participants:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Motives} = & a + b_1\text{Tob} + b_2\text{Brew} + b_3\text{Pharm} + b_4\text{Gas} + b_5\text{PosSales} \\ & + b_6\text{NegSales} + b_7\text{Sustain} + b_8\text{PosSales*} \text{Tob} + \\ & b_9\text{PosSales*} \text{Brew} + b_{10}\text{PosSales*} \text{Pharm} + \\ & b_{11}\text{PosSales*} \text{Gas} + b_{12}\text{NegSales*} \text{Tob} + \\ & b_{13}\text{NegSales*} \text{Brew} + b_{14}\text{NegSales*} \text{Pharm} + \\ & b_{15}\text{NegSales*} \text{Gas} + b_{16}\text{Sustain*} \text{Tob} + \\ & b_{17}\text{Sustain*} \text{Brew} + b_{18}\text{Sustain*} \text{Pharm} + \\ & b_{19}\text{Sustain*} \text{Gas} + \text{Importance} + \text{Age} + \text{Gender} + \text{Edu-} \\ & \text{cation} \end{aligned}$$

RESULTS

Regression results are contained in Table 2. As shown, there are significant main effects and interactions. Looking at the standardized betas reported in the table, we find some interesting results. When compared to the base case of an unrelated CSM campaign done by a fast food company (the “average” industry), tobacco companies and brewers (harmful products) had less positive attitudes towards the partnership and more self-centered motives (Attitude: $b_{\text{tobacco}} = -.238$, $b_{\text{brewers}} = -.126$ $p < .05$; Motives: $b_{\text{tobacco}} = -.284$, $b_{\text{brewers}} = -.178$ $p < .01$). Alternatively, the two industries that were perceived to have helpful products ($b_{\text{gas}} = .124$ $p < .05$, $b_{\text{pharm}} = .091$, $p < .085$) had more positive motives associated with them, but the overall attitudes toward their CSM campaigns were not statistically different from the base case. There were also very interesting effects for the different types of CSM campaigns. All four campaigns that were more closely tied to the company’s core business (linked positively to sales or sustainability of the company), had significantly less altruistic, society-serving motives associated with them. This result would be expected since profit motives were more obvious in these cases. The two CSM campaigns that were directly tied to product sales (either positively or negatively) had significantly less positive attitudes toward the partnership ($b_{\text{possale}} = -.145$ $p < .01$; $b_{\text{negsale}} = -.25$ $p < .001$), while the campaign designed to maintain the sustainability of the firm was not statistically different from the base case ($b_{\text{sustain}} = -.021$ $p < .736$).

The interaction effects between the types of CSM campaigns and industries provide us with evidence that there are statistically

significant differences between them, particularly for the industries that produce more harmful products. Specifically, for both tobacco and brewers, participants had significantly more positive attitudes towards those campaigns that would reduce the sales of the products if successful ($b_{\text{negsale*tob}} = .161$ $p < .001$; $b_{\text{negsale*brew}} = .190$ $p < .01$). These two conditions also generated more society-serving, altruistic motives from the participants ($b_{\text{negsale*tob}} = .128$ $p < .001$; $b_{\text{negsale*brew}} = .260$ $p < .0001$). For the purely sin industry (tobacco), there is an additional interaction effect in that the campaign that was designed to sustain the firm generated more society-serving motives ($b_{\text{sustain*tob}} = .149$ $p < .05$) as well as a more positive attitude ($b_{\text{sustain*tob}} = .135$ $p < .05$) than the base case.

The control variables also yielded significant results. The more important the cause, the more positive the attitude toward the partnership ($b_{\text{importance}} = .295$ $p < .001$) as well as the inferred motives being more altruistic ($b_{\text{importance}} = .232$ $p < .0001$). In addition, women were likely to generate more society-serving motives ($b_{\text{gender}} = -.042$ $p < .05$) as well as form more positive attitudes towards the partnership ($b_{\text{gender}} = -.048$ $p < .05$).

Cell means for Attitude toward the partnership and Motives are reported in Tables 3 and 4, respectively. While these means are consistent with the regression results already presented, looking at differences within each industry also supports the notion that consumers evaluate the various types of CSM campaigns differently, based on the industry participating in the campaign. Scheffe tests were performed within each industry to find which groups differed from each other. Groupings significant at $\alpha = .05$ are reported in the final column of both tables. Based on these post-hoc tests, we find the following differences among the various sorts of CSM campaigns. In the tobacco industry, the corporate sustainability CSM campaign is viewed as the most positive, and is different for both the campaign that are positively tied to sales and the one that is completely unrelated to the core business. In the gas industry, the unrelated CSM campaign is the most positively evaluated, which is statistically higher than the campaign aimed at corporate sustainability. The pharmaceutical industry appears to be the only industry where differences among the various types of CSM campaigns do not exist in the attitude towards the partnership; all efforts are positively evaluated. For brewers, the CSM effort that is negatively tied to sales is the most positively evaluated, and is different than the campaign that would increase sales. Finally, for the fast food industry, the lowest evaluation exists for the campaign

TABLE 2
Regression Results

Dependent Variables	Attitude toward partnership			Motives		
	Independent Variables	Std Beta	T	Sig.	Std. Beta	T
Tobacco	-.238	-3.943	.0001	-.284	-4.841	.0001
Brewers	-.126	-1.960	.050	-.178	-2.845	.004
Pharmaceuticals	.018	.324	.746	.091	1.721	.085
Gas	.052	.883	.377	.124	2.171	.030
Pos. Sales	-.145	-2.632	.009	-.131	-2.433	.015
Neg. Sales	-.250	-3.549	.0001	-.262	-3.828	.0001
Sustain	-.021	-.337	.736	-.191	-3.078	.002
Pos. Sales x Tobacco	.027	.705	.481	-.047	-1.275	.202
Pos. Sales x Brewers	-.010	-.254	.799	-.054	-1.480	.139
Pos. Sales x Pharmaceuticals	.034	.924	.355	-.051	-1.415	.157
Pos. Sales x Gas	.027	.732	.464	-.032	-.898	.369
Neg. Sales x Tobacco	.161	3.915	.0001	.128	3.208	.001
Neg. Sales x Brewers	.190	3.038	.002	.260	4.266	.0001
Neg. Sales x Pharmaceuticals	.063	1.505	.133	.066	1.616	.106
Neg. Sales x Gas	.046	.876	.381	-.009	-.166	.868
Sustain x Tobacco	.135	2.534	.011	.149	2.853	.004
Sustain x Brewers	-.052	-1.265	.206	.004	.109	.913
Sustain x Pharmaceuticals	-.001	-.031	.975	.006	.162	.871
Sustain x Gas	-.081	-2.015	.044	-.027	-.697	.486
Importance	.293	13.725	.0001	.232	11.166	.0001
Age	.019	.819	.413	-.027	-1.211	.226
Gender	-.048	-2.306	.021	-.042	-2.067	.039
Education	-.009	-.399	.690	-.036	-1.636	.102

TABLE 3
Cell Means
Attitude towards partnership

	Positive Tie to Sales (Group 1)	Negative Tie to Sales (Group 2)	Tied to Corporate Sustainability (Group 3)	No connection (Group 4)	Scheffe Contrasts within Industry (alpha =.05)
Tobacco	4.11 (n=84)	4.85 (n=78)	5.11 (n=158)	4.34 (n=80)	1&4, 2&4, 2&3
Gas	5.34 (n=77)	5.13 (n=157)	5.01 (n=76)	5.67 (n=84)	1&2&3, 1&2&4
Pharmaceuticals	5.29 (n=77)	5.36 (n=83)	5.68 (n=74)	5.54 (n=76)	1&2&3&4
Brewers	4.41 (n=78)	5.17 (n=235)	4.54 (n=81)	4.92 (n=77)	1&3&4, 2&3&4
Fast food	4.94 (n=236)	4.46 (n=76)	5.54 (n=78)	5.50 (n=74)	1&2, 1&3&4

TABLE 4
Cell Means
Motives

	Positive Tie to Sales (Group 1)	Negative Tie to Sales (Group 2)	Tied to Corporate Sustainability (Group 3)	No connection (Group 4)	Scheffe Contrasts within Industry (alpha =.05)
Tobacco	3.17 (n=84)	3.90 (n=77)	3.91 (n=158)	3.71 (n=80)	1, 2&3&4
Gas	4.50 (n=77)	4.38 (n=157)	4.44 (n=76)	5.151 (n=83)	1&2&3,4
Pharmaceuticals	4.35 (n=77)	4.83 (n=83)	4.63 (n=74)	5.03 (n=76)	1&2&3, 2&3&4
Brewers	3.51 (n=77)	4.57 (n=234)	3.70 (n=81)	4.16 (n=76)	1&3,2&4,3&4
Fast food	4.33 (n=237)	3.96 (n=76)	4.24 (n=77)	4.75 (n=74)	1&2&3,1&4

that is negatively tied to sales. This is significantly different than the campaign focused on sustaining the business as well as the campaign that is completely unrelated.

As shown in Table 4, differences also exist in the motives inferred by the participants. For the tobacco industry, the most self-serving motives are generated for the CSM campaign positively tied to sales; this mean is different than the three other types of campaigns. In the gas industry, motives for all campaigns are similar, except for the unrelated category, which has significantly more society-serving motives associated with it. The pharmaceutical industry exhibits a difference between the CSM campaign that would increase sales (which has the most self-serving motives) and the CSM campaign unrelated to the core business (which has the most society-serving motives). The brewing industry has the most society-serving motives inferred with the negative tie to sales campaign, which is different than the campaign that had a positive tie to sales and the campaign aimed at sustainability. Finally, the fast food industry has the most society-serving motives associated with the unrelated condition, which is different than the CSM that is negatively tied to sales and the CSM efforts that are aimed at sustainability. Exhibit 2 graphically shows each industry with the CSM effort that generated the most positive attitude as well as the most society-serving motives. As shown in this exhibit, there are distinct differences among the various industries.

DISCUSSION

This study shows that differences do exist in how types of CSM campaigns are evaluated based on the type of industry associated with the firm undertaking the campaign. Specifically, two dimensions are considered in describing various industries—the helpful/harmful nature of the products and the helpful/harmful nature of the production of the products. Virtuous industries are those industries that are perceived to produce helpful products using less harmful production methods. As shown in the results, participants evaluate all of their CSM campaigns fairly positively, even though the nature of the motives varied across the different conditions. This supports the notion that these good corporate citizens are given the benefit of the doubt when undertaking all sorts of campaigns. Alternatively, the sin industry (perceived to produce harmful products in more harmful ways) generate the more positive evaluations when they undertook campaigns targeted at sustaining

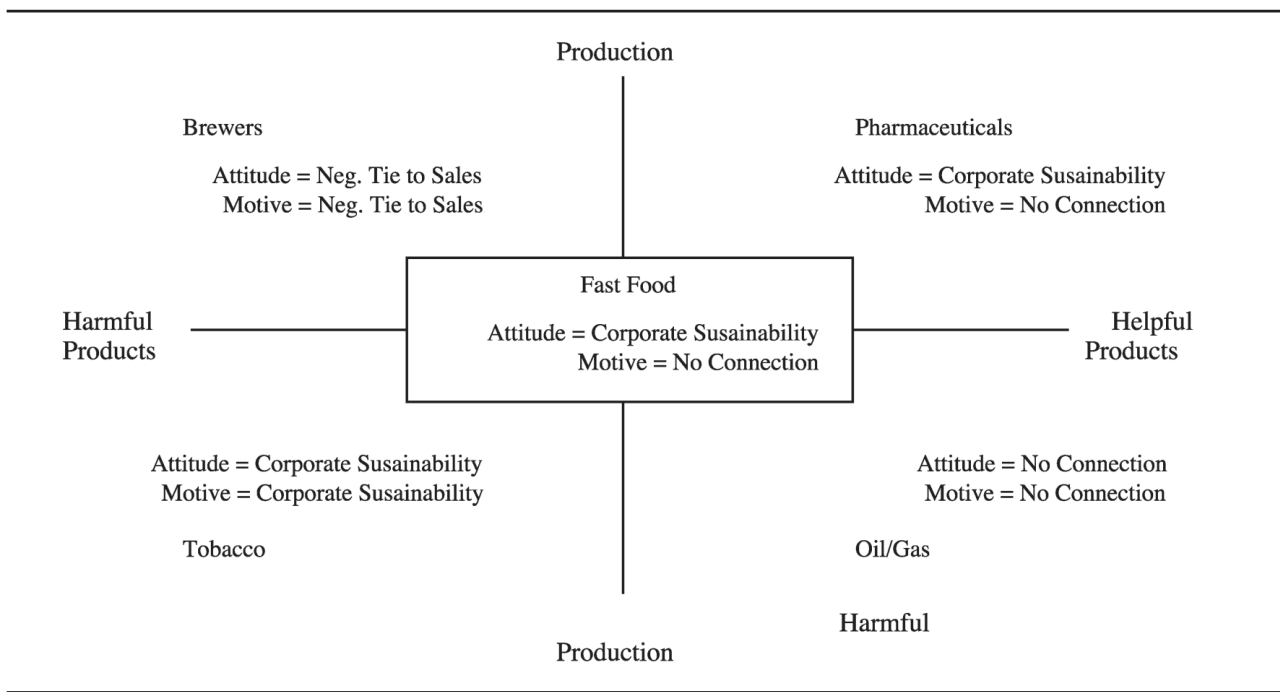
their business or decreasing overall sales of their products. Our mixed industries (gas and brewers) exhibit mixed results in their evaluations as well. The gas industry (helpful products/harmful production) generates the most positive attitude in the condition that is completely unrelated to the business, while the brewers are most successful with a negative tie to sales. Perhaps it is the decreased use of harmful products that are driving the results for both tobacco and breweries. The fast food industry, our “mid-range” industry has the lowest attitude with the CSM efforts that are negatively tied to sales.

The motive results support the findings presented by Ellen et al. (2002) in that firms do not have to be perceived as purely altruistic and society-serving in their motivations behind CSM campaigns. While the CSM types that generated the most positive attitudes also generated some of the most society-serving motives; in many circumstances, these motives would not be classified as altruistic or pure. For example, the sustainability condition in the tobacco industry generates motives that averaged 3.91 on a seven point scale. The overall attitude toward this partnership is a 5.11 (on a seven point scale). While these motives are clearly just above average, the overall attitude is fairly high.

These findings hint at some promising uses of CSM initiatives to improve the image of a brand or an entire industry. Specifically, those findings associated with the tobacco industry suggest that these firms do not only have to undertake campaigns that would lead to a reduction in sales, campaigns aimed at sustainability may have an impact on the company that is just as positive. The regression results show that differences continue to exist when controlling for the importance of the cause and demographic differences.

Obviously, no clear recommendations can be made to various corporations based on this one study, but these results do show a promising area for future research. Many firms are turning to CSM campaigns to build and repair their brands. This study points to the importance of how existing perceptions about industries influence the motives inferred by customers as well as the evaluation of the partnership. More research is needed to investigate these relationships further. For example, in a sin industry such as tobacco, is it even possible for a firm to rise above the industry’s negative perceptions and be perceived as a more socially-responsible company? Does it even matter to the bottom line? Additionally, for

EXHIBIT 2
CSM Efforts Linked to Most Positive Attitudes & Most Altruistic Motives



those “mixed” industries, is it possible to use CSM to change perceptions about their firm’s products or production methods? Is it better for a gas company to focus on minimizing harm to the environment or should they focus on CSM campaigns that are important to their customers, but unrelated to their core business? These results suggest people have more positive attitudes towards unrelated campaigns. However, if long-term brand equity is considered, consumers may actually prefer the efforts that would improve the harmful production practices. Moreover, further study is needed to determine if attitude toward the partnership transfers to attitude toward the corporation.

While this study does not provide explicit guidelines for corporations to follow, it does provide the preliminary evidence that there is no one type of CSM campaign that works for every firm. Uncovering when each of these different campaigns would be most effective at building different types of brands is critical information that many corporations can use.

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APPENDIX A
Scenarios

	Positive Link to Sales	Negative Link to Sales	Strategic Sustainability	Not Related
Tobacco	Every year, a major tobacco company donates a percentage of customer sales during a three month period to medical research on tobacco-related illnesses such as cancer, emphysema and asthma.	A major tobacco company sponsors a number of activities targeted at preventing youth smoking. These programs include MTV's "Don't Smoke" advertising campaign and Operation ID, which encourages retailers to only sell tobacco products to adults.	A major tobacco company has taken aggressive action to eliminate child labor in the growing and production of tobacco products in developing countries.	A major tobacco company donates computers to local schools.
Gas	A major gas company will donate free gas to needy families based on a percentage of their annual sales.	A major gas company sponsors programs aimed at educating consumers in energy conservation.	A major gas company partnered with a wildlife advocacy group to limit the environmental impact of drilling and the production of their products.	A major gas company donates computers to local schools.
Pharmaceuticals	A major drug company donates free drugs to clinics in developing countries based on a percentage of their annual sales.	A major drug company sponsors educational programs designed to educate people on how to live a healthy lifestyle to avoid chronic illness later in life.	A major drug company donates to research funds for the treatment of life-threatening diseases.	A major drug company donates computers to local schools.
Brewers	A major beer producer sponsors sporting events where their products are sold.	A major beer producer sponsors "We Card" programs aimed at the prevention of underage drinking.	A major beer producer has a "Don't Drink and Drive" Program.	A major beer producer donates computers to local schools.
Fast Food	A local fast food restaurant hosts an annual school event where teachers work in the restaurant for two hours and all proceeds are donated to the school.	A fast food company sponsors an educational program designed to teach children the importance of healthy eating.	A major fast food company partners with environmental groups in developing new, environmentally friendly packaging.	A major fast food restaurant donates computers to local schools.

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Community Oriented Corporate Social Responsibility: Consumer Evaluation of Community Attachment

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Many studies from the sociology literature have noted the importance of communities and feelings of community attachment on individual decision making (Goudy 1990; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). In an age of globalization, increasingly mobile populations, and growing urban sprawl, the character of social interactions are altered away from communal attachments and more towards primarily economic based contacts through work and shopping (Putnam 2000). The ensuing sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction with everyday life may lead people in these situations to regain some sense of balance by seeking social-collective activities, (Bellah et al. 1986). Arnold, Kozinets, and Handelman (2001) suggest that individuals may turn to businesses in the community, such as retailers, to provide a sense of community. As such, through their community oriented Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, businesses might attempt to portray themselves as attached to the community (Besser 1999; Miller and Besser 2000).

Theoretical Development

Drawing on Oliver (1991), organizations may employ different CSR strategies that demonstrate their attachment to the community. This study empirically examines three of these strategies. The first is acquiescence whereby the organization presents a direct and unquestioned acceptance and compliance to community rules. Here, the organization contributes directly to community causes with no economic based expectations in return. The second strategy is compromise whereby the organization's contribution to a community cause is directly linked to an economic return. Cause-related marketing is an illustration of this where a community contribution is directly linked to the sale of a product. The third strategy is symbolic acquiescence where the organization creates a façade of acquiescence by symbolically linking itself to a community cause, but not making a tangible contribution. It is hypothesized that the type of strategy will have a significant impact on a consumer's evaluation of the business' community attachment whereby an acquiescence strategy will be most effective and the symbolic acquiescence strategy will be least effective.

An important variable that is hypothesized to moderate the effectiveness of these strategies on the consumer's assessment of the organization's community attachment is the type of ownership of the business employing the strategies. In particular, large, non-local businesses are typically regarded by consumers as strictly economic-oriented operators and unaware of local issues (Brennan and Lundsten 2000; Miller and Besser 2000). As such, it is hypothesized that an acquiescence community oriented strategy will be more effective for non-local businesses than local businesses in that consumers would not expect non-local businesses to comply so directly with community norms.

A final hypothesis is that community attachment will mediate the impact of strategy and ownership type on a consumer's patronage intention. In other words, community oriented CSR strategies and ownership type do not lead directly to a patronage decision. Instead, they help the consumer assess the degree of attachment that business has to the community. It is this assessment that is hypothesized to influence patronage decisions. Of course, this hypothesis must be

put in context. Community attachment is but one variable that resides alongside other important variables, such as price, quality, etc., in influencing patronage decisions. However, the purpose of this study is to highlight the potential impact that community attachment may have on a consumer's patronage decision.

Empirical Research

Results from a 3 (acquiescence, compromise, and symbolic acquiescence strategies) x 2 (local versus non-local ownership) between subjects experimental design in a retailing context support the importance of considering the community attachment construct. First, it was found that the type of ownership had a significant effect on the consumer's evaluation of the retailer's community attachment. A locally owned retailer was regarded as significantly more attached to the community than a non-local retailer. In addition, type of ownership also moderated the effect of strategy on assessments of community attachment. For local retailers, there was no significant difference between the effectiveness of the three different types of strategies on the consumer's assessment of the retailer's community attachment. This included the use of symbolic acquiescence. However, for non-local retailers, the type of strategy used made a significant difference. For non-local retailers, an acquiescence strategy was significantly more effective at building an evaluation of community attachment than a symbolic acquiescence strategy. The effectiveness of a compromise strategy fell in between the two.

Finally, community attachment is shown to completely mediate the impact of strategy and type of ownership on a consumer's patronage intentions. This mediating role speaks to the possibility of the community attachment construct as being another contributor to consumer patronage decisions. Community attachment also helps explain how an organization's community-oriented CSR strategies might translate into consumer patronage. In particular, community attachment may serve as an important objective in guiding marketers as they develop CSR initiatives. In designing these initiatives, marketers must also take into consideration the nature of their organization. For non-local businesses, the use of an acquiescence strategy is the most effective means to convince consumers of community

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A Motivational Framework for Self-Directed Hedonic Consumption

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Marketing researchers view both play and adventure as forms of self-directed hedonic consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982) and investigate the various motives for certain types of this consumption, especially when it is voluntary and high-risk (Celsi et al. 1993, Shoham et al. 2000, Ewert and Hollenhorst 1989, Arnould and Price 1993). In everyday play and adventure, however, most consumers do not assume this level of risk taking yet we know considerably less about the motives for less-risky and non-risky forms of hedonic consumption. To our knowledge, there is little research in the marketing literature that examines motivations for non-risky, habitually-practiced hedonic activities (i.e. hobbies), such as training for triathlons or marathons, yet these are among the fastest growing leisure activities in North America, increasing rapidly in participation year after year (Woodrow 2000).

The objective of this paper was to address this gap in our understanding of the motives driving participation in these non-risky, habitually-practiced hedonic activities by developing a framework for better insight into the complex hedonic consumption motivations behind participation. We developed this framework by integrating and extending existing research in marketing, sports psychology and leisure studies. We then discussed several expectations for this framework and provided an initial, exploratory application of it in the context of a low-risk activity. We concluded by discussing the results of this study, providing general recommendations and directions for future research.

Celsi et al.'s (1993) framework has served as a fundamental starting point for marketing researchers interested in consumers' participation in risky hedonic consumption (Arnould and Price 1993, Dodson 1996, Shoham, Rose and Kahle 1998, 2000). A common element in this extended research is the repeated identification of the three general categories of motives: Self-Efficacy, Normative and Hedonic. The validity of these three categories finds support in Arnould and Price (1993), Shoham, Rose and Kahle (2000) and Hopkinson and Pujari (1999). More interestingly, several studies in the fields of sports psychology and leisure studies, while not specifically referring to these three categories of motives, present results that can be interpreted as supporting the existence of similar categories of motives in less risky hedonic consumption contexts (Brannigan and McDougall 1983, Ewert and Hollenhorst 1989, Gill et al 1996, Ogles, Masters and Richardson 1995). While research in the marketing, leisure studies and sports psychology fields appear to independently arrive at similar findings, there is no existing research that integrates the fields with respect to commonalities that exist between risky and non-risky activities.

To fill this gap, we proposed a general framework of motivations for participation in habitually-practiced, self-directed hedonic consumption. While largely based on Celsi et al.'s (1993) framework, we made several important adaptations, with the primary goal of bringing the model out of the specific context of risky activities into a more general application which would be of interest to a broader group of marketers. We maintained the same structure proposed by Celsi et al., with three categories of motivation: Self-Efficacy, Normative, and Hedonic. The pattern of movement along the continua of motivations also remained the same as in the Celsi et al. model; people move between stages depending on the level of two moderating factors. However, two necessary changes in expanding the model beyond risky activities were: 1) to

reconsider the dimension of "Acculturation of Risk" and replace it with "Desire for Challenge" and 2) to replace Celsi et al.'s label of "Survival" with that of "Completion." We discussed the rationale for these suggested changes, the assumptions of the resulting framework, and developed some expectations based on its application in a non-risky context.

We investigated a preliminary application of the proposed framework through a convenience sample, where participation in an Internet-administered self-report survey was solicited from various local groups of adult runners, triathletes and swimmers. All respondents participated, to different degrees, in these habitually practiced activities and received no compensation (i.e., sponsorship, scholarships, etc.) for their participation. We constructed a survey measuring our theoretical constructs based on a combination of sources, including Ewert and Hollenhorst (1989), Shoham et al. (2000), Arnould and Price (1993), Masters et al. (1992), and Dodson (1996). Based on comments received in the pretest and our psychometric analysis of the scales, we made several revisions to arrive at our final survey. In the final survey, one set of questions gathered information about each respondent's level of participation and their individual level of Desire for Challenge; another set of questions addressed each of the three categories of motivations (Self-Efficacy, Normative, and Hedonic); and a final set of questions collected various demographic data on the respondent.

The results of our analyses suggested, as expected, that there are changes in the characterization of motives as Desire for Challenge and Experience (the two dimensions of the model) change. Additionally, we found that it is important to measure experience both as a function of total experience (measured in years) and frequency of participation (measured in hours a week) in order to get at both the internal and external motives for participation. Finally, we determined that it is highly likely that the relationships between the constructs are not linear, which suggests a need for further investigation and more sophisticated modeling techniques in order to determine the exact pattern of changes.

In the final section, we discussed several limitations of our study and suggested directions for future research. We concluded with a discussion of managerial implications, including the potential to use the measures of Desire for Challenge and Experience to predict motivations of participants in non-risky activities, implying an enhanced ability to profile and target consumers of these activities.

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An Elaborated Model of Satisfaction With Live Musical Entertainment

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Live musical performances permeate and give meaning to our existence, in some cases allowing us to transcend the stresses and sameness of our lives. The paucity of extant research looms large when compared with the vast number of local bands, gospel choirs, even highly paid professional performers who perform around the country in corporate and non-profit fund-raisers, clubs and restaurants, and concert halls. Moreover, understanding the relationship between music and consumptive motives surrounding achievement of transcendent experience is in its infancy. This paper seeks to redress this deficiency by introducing the concept of hyper-involvement and testing linkages between this construct and other evaluations of live musical performances.

The literature clearly identifies several states of involvement, including situational and enduring, and a continuum from low involvement to high involvement. However, there are occasions when our involvement conceivably becomes all-consuming and overwhelms us. In this condition, we are totally focused on a single act or experience. "Mesmerized," "consumed," "in the zone," "in a stupor" might be everyday expressions for this state. If this state is reached in a religious context, it might be described as "rapture." We believe this state is so frequently the goal of consumptive behaviors that a separate analysis of this state is justified. Hyper-involvement and flow are related. Csikszentmihalyi (1991) defines flow as "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter." We characterize "flow" as an active state, such as Michael Jordan "in the zone". It is this state of active control, and the lack thereof, that separates the two constructs. By comparison, we characterize hyper-involvement as a passive state, e.g. a person who is "in a stupor" at a rock concert or is swept up in religious "rapture."

Mizerski and his colleagues (1988) suggest an "aesthetic experiential processing scale" which contains a few elements related to our hyper-involvement construct. Their results suggest that experiential processing does exist, and is a condition necessary for the existence of hyper-involvement. However, and importantly, this scale fails to capture the escape from reality as conceptualized in hyper-involvement. In prior work, Minor and colleagues (2002) developed a preliminary model of customer satisfaction with live musical performances. The six factors were musical ability, musician appearance, musical sound, stage appearance, facilities, and audience interaction.

Minor et al. (2002) proposed a relationship between the six factors and overall satisfaction with live musical experiences, although this was not empirically tested in that paper. By using music as a situation within which to investigate hyper-involvement, we can integrate hyper-involvement with the earlier model of satisfaction with musical performance. This discussion leads to a series of hypothesized relationships between the six-factor model developed by Minor et al. (2002), satisfaction, and hyper-involvement. In addition, relationships can be postulated between satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

To test these relationships, a new scale was developed to assess hyper-involvement. This scale, along with existing measures for satisfaction, the six-factor model, and behavioral intentions

were combined to form a survey instrument. This instrument was pre-tested and subsequently administered to undergraduates at a regional southern university. This sample is appropriate considering 90% of music is consumed by this age group.

The reliabilities were well within the guidelines established by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). CFA results from analysis of the six-factor music satisfaction model were acceptable, especially when compared to a unidimensional representation of the factors (RMSEA=.05; CFI=.99; NFI=.99). CFA results also suggested good convergent and discriminant validity for the six-item hyper-involvement scale when compared with situational involvement. Path analysis was used for hypothesis testing. Results did not support the hypothesized relationships between the six-factor model of music satisfaction and satisfaction or hyper-involvement. Using the modification indices, a pattern began to emerge whereby most of the effects of four of the factors were mediated through the staging and audience interaction factors (see Figure 1). The complex pattern of relationships also shows that factors affecting hyper-involvement, again with the exception of musician ability, were mediated through staging. Due to the atheoretical process used in modifying the model, validation was conducted using pre-test data and demonstrated the good fit between the data and the model (RMSEA=.06; CFI=.99; NFI=.96). As hypothesized, the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions were significant based on path coefficients and fit statistics. This provided support for H₇.

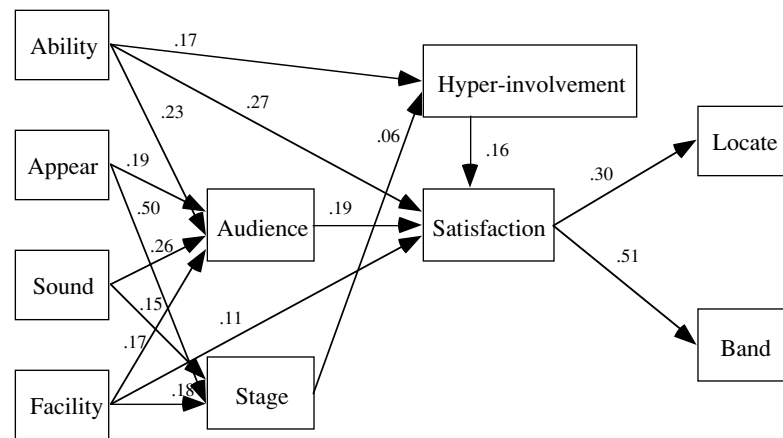
The most important finding from this study is the relative importance of musical ability in forming satisfaction and behavioral intentions with respect to live musical performances. The complex pattern of relationships between the six-factor model of music satisfaction and satisfaction suggests other managerially relevant considerations. The second impact of the study is the generation of the hyper-involvement construct and understanding of the relationship between this construct and satisfaction. An important consideration in this research is its possible application to other contexts, specifically impulse buying, consumption of fantasy enclaves, and consumption of certain types of leisure and recreation.

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FIGURE 1
Path Analysis Results



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Falling in Love with a Product: The Structure of a Romantic Consumer-Product Relationship

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ABSTRACT

Consumers often say they are “in love with a product or brand,” but what does being in love with a product really mean? Do consumers actually find themselves in a romantic product relationship that resembles a love relationship with another person? To address this question, a sample of male bikers ($n=179$) was surveyed with an instrument used in psychology to study different styles of interpersonal love. Findings suggest that bikers’ love toward their motorcycles resembles an interpersonal love that is passionate, possessive and selfless in nature. Only the passion component of interpersonal love had an impact on loyalty to their bikes.

Consumers frequently ascribe existence to relationships they form with products and/or brands. As examples, some consumers name their automobiles while others insist on Harley motorcycles or demand “the real thing” over New Coke. Obviously, the vehicles are not just viewed as transportation and even classic Coke means more to loyal followers than simply a can of refreshment. What is more, consumers often say they are “in love with a product or brand,” but what does being in love with a product really mean? Is love for a product a strong expression of attachment or loyalty, or do consumers actually find themselves in a romantic relationship resembling love toward another person? If product love is romantic in makeup, then theories in psychology regarding different types of interpersonal love may be useful in capturing the fundamental nature of this phenomenon.

Some researchers in psychology argue that “falling in love is something that happens to us, not something we make happen” (Walsh 1991, p.186), suggesting that marketers cannot induce consumers to fall romantically in love with products. At the same time, proposed theories explaining why people fall in love provide insight on how close interpersonal relationships are formed (see Sternberg 1987 for a review). One study in particular (Lee 1977) developed a typology identifying six styles of love, one or more of which may explain the type of the love consumers develop with products. Marketers desire to form close consumer-product relationships because it leads to customer retention through brand loyalty. One organization recognized for having extremely loyal customers is Harley-Davidson (see e.g., Berry 1995; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Spethmann 1998). For that reason, the Harley brand of motorcycle appears to be well suited for exploring the existence and structure of romantic consumer-product relationships.

Borrowing from the literature on interpersonal love, the primary objective of the study is to develop a theoretical framework for understanding the structure of love toward a product. Is consumers’ “love” for a product similar to or different from romantic love toward another person? Secondary objectives are to identify different love styles and any demographic features that might be related (see e.g., Lee 1977; Taraban and Hendrick 1995). The study’s findings should not only provide marketers with an understanding of the fundamental nature of product love, but also offer some insight into the formation of romantic product/brand relationships. The next section reviews previous literature and discusses a theoretical framework linking interpersonal with product love.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Although there is no universally accepted definition of love, anyone knows when s/he is in love with another. Love is an outcome of bi-directional interaction between two partners, yet its highly dynamic interactivity makes it challenging for researchers to study. But, when the target of love is replaced with an object (e.g., a product or brand), love becomes unidirectional and thus less dynamic. In this way it is perhaps easier to study product rather than interpersonal love. Unfortunately, to date there has been little research on this issue. This also raises a fundamental research question; can product love be described as romantic even though it is not directed toward another human being? Consider Branden’s (1980) definition of love quoted below.

“The origin of our desire to love lies in our profound need to value, to find things in the world which we can care about, can feel excited and inspired by. It is our values that tie us to the world and that motivate us to go on living. Every action is taken for the purpose of gaining or protecting something we believe will benefit our life or enhance our experience” (p.67).

From this definition, it can be concluded that the target of a romantic relationship (i.e., love) is not limited to another human being.

The term love has been applied in the marketing literature in several ways. Extending resource exchange theory (Foa and Foa 1974), Brinberg and Wood (1983) suggested six resource categories for market exchange that included love; the others are status, information, money, goods, and services. More recently, Fournier (1998) proposed an integrated framework for brand-consumer relationships categorizing relationship quality as love/passion, commitment, and intimacy, categories that correspond to the proposed dimensions of Sternberg’s (1986) triangular theory of interpersonal love.

Concepts similar to love have also been studied in the marketing literature. Individual self-expression (e.g., Kopytoff 1986; McCracken 1986) and identity development (e.g., Kleine, Kleine III, and Allen 1991) have been suggested as key drivers of emotional attachment to an object. Ethnographic research on the extremely loyal customers of Harley-Davidson motorcycles (Schouten and McAlexander 1995) and the television series *Star Trek* (Kozinets 2001) has introduced the idea of “brand communities” (e.g., McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002). Brand communities refer to groups of consumers “based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand” (Muniz Jr. and O’Guinn 2001, p.412). These and other studies have investigated consumption phenomena akin to “being in love” with a product or brand. Although these studies intimate the possibility of a romantic consumer-product relationship, none have attempted to directly link theories of interpersonal love with love toward a product.

Numerous studies on interpersonal love in psychology have proposed various theories on the nature of love and developed suitable scales to empirically test these frameworks. Table 1 presents a summary of five prominent theories and their dimensions or styles of love.

Conducting a comprehensive factor analysis of all five theories, Hendrick and Hendrick (1989) reported that Lee’s (1977)

TABLE 1
A Summary of Interpersonal Love Relationship Theories

Theory	Dimension	Source
Love Attitude Scale	Eros, Ludus, Storage, Pragma, Mania, Agape	Lee (1977)
Relationship Rating Form	Viability, Intimacy Passion, Caring Satisfaction, Conflict	Davis and Todd (1982, 1985)
Triangular Theory of Love	Intimacy, Passion Commitment	Sternberg (1986)
Passionate Love Scale		Hatfield and Sprecher (1986)
Attachment Styles	Avoidant Anxious-Ambivalent Secure	Shaver and Hazan (1987), Hazan and Shaver (1987)

TABLE 2
Descriptions of Each of Lee’s Love Attitude Styles

Style	Definition	Description
Eros	Romantic, Passionate	The search for a beloved whose psychical presentation of self love embodies an image already held in the mind of the lover.
Ludus	Game-Playing Love	Playful or game love. Permissive and pluralistic. The degree of ‘involvement’ is carefully controlled, jealousy is eschewed, and relationships are often multiple and relatively short-lived.
Storage	Friendship love	Based on slowly developing affection and companionship, a gradual disclosure of self, an avoidance of self-conscious passion, and an expectation of long-term commitment.
Mania	Possessive, Dependent Love	An obsessive, jealous, emotionally intense love style characterized by preoccupation with the beloved and a need for repeated reassurance of being loved.
Agape	All-giving, Selfless Love	Altruistic love, given because the lover sees it as his duty to love without expectation of reciprocity. Gentle, caring, and guided by reason more than emotion.
Pragma	Logical, ‘shopping list’ love	Conscious consideration of ‘vital statistics’ about a suitable beloved. Education, vocation, religion, age, and numerous other demographic characteristics of the potential beloved are taken into account in the search for a compatible match.

(Taken from Lee 1977; Hendrick and Hendrick 1986)

typology showed the most independency among the six purported styles of love. The triangular theory of love (Sternberg 1986) and the Relationship Rating Form (Davis and Todd 1982, 1985) showed significant interdependency among dimensions. By contrast, the Passionate Love Scale (Hatfield and Sprecher 1986) and Attachment Styles (Shaver and Hazan 1987; Hazan and Shaver 1987) were unidimensional, resulting in a single factor. Because of the high

level of independency, Lee’s structural typology of readily distinguishable love styles was chosen to assess consumers’ love toward a product. Table 2 contains definitions and descriptions of each of these love attitude styles (see also Hendrick and Hendrick 1986).

In addition to the independency of love styles demonstrated by Hendrick and Hendrick (1989), Lee’s (1977) typology has another major advantage over competing theories. Building on Lee’s origi-

nal work, a series of studies has linked different love styles to various demographic and personality traits (e.g., Hendrick and Hendrick 1986; Taraban and Hendrick 1995).

METHODS

Sample

A sample of male bikers attending Biketoberfest, a large bike rally held in Daytona Beach, Florida, was used for the study. Biketoberfest attendees were selected because of the strong bond they exhibit with their bikes, especially the Harley-Davidson brand. It is an ideal group of consumers with much potential for a romantic product relationship. In addition, bikers at Bikeoberfest are known to have a wide range of demographics so that the effects of these variables on the consumer-product relationship can be assessed.

The demographic profile presented in Table 3 reveals that the majority of respondents (68.2%) were between 35-54 years of age and married (55.3%). Respondents' education level was fairly evenly distributed: a high school education (27.4%), 2 years of college (24.0%), and either 4 years of college or graduate school (27.4%). The two predominant categories for occupation were professional (29.6%) and skilled/semi-skilled (22.3%). Percentages of income <\$20K (2.8%), between \$20K-39,999 (23.5%), \$40K-59,999 (25.2%), \$60K-79,999 (16.8%), \$80K-99,999 (9.5%), and >\$100K (17.3%) were also reported. The vast majority of the sample owned a motorcycle that was a Harley-Davidson (73%) and had previously attended Biketoberfest an average of four times (mean=3.9).

Survey Instrument

Data for the study was collected by means of a self-report questionnaire. Based on Lee's (1977) love typology, the short form (Hendrick, Hendrick, and Dicke 1998) of the Love Attitude Scale (Hendrick and Hendrick 1986) was applied to identify which of the six styles of love consumers develop with their favorite brand of motorcycle. The short form was used because Hendrick, Hendrick and Dicke (1998) reported that the abbreviated Love Attitude Scale accounted for more systematic variance than the original 7-item scales. The shortened 18-item version of the scale is composed of six 3-item subscales representing Eros, Ludus, Storage, Pragma, Mania, and Agape love styles (refer to Table 4). Items were each measured on a 9-point scale ranging from 1="Strongly Disagree" to 9="Strongly Agree."

The two dependent variables in the study were overall love and brand loyalty. Overall love was gauged with three items: "I am in love with my bike," "I feel very possessive toward my bike," and "If I could never be on my bike, I would feel miserable", taken from Rubin's (1970) multi-item Romantic Love Scale. Four items were used to assess active and passive brand loyalty (see Ganesh, Arnold, and Reynolds 2000). Two items measuring active brand loyalty were: "I would highly recommend my bike to my friends" and "I often make positive comments about my bike to my friends." Two items: "Even if my bike were costly to maintain, I would still ride it" and "In the near future, I intend to ride my bike more" were used to measure passive loyalty. Items in these scales were also measured on a 9-point agreement scale identical to that used above.

Demographic information on respondents' age, marital status, education level, occupation, household income, and previous Biketoberfest attendance was also collected. Two other classification questions queried respondents on their favorite brand of motorcycle and the length of time they had owned it.

Data Collection

An intercept technique was used to distribute the questionnaires along a one-block area on Main Street in Daytona Beach, the central gathering place for attendees. Male respondents were provided with clipboards and pens to facilitate filling out the questionnaire and, as an incentive, received a "sew-on" Biketoberfest patch. On average, the questionnaire took about 12 minutes to complete and approximately two out of three individuals that were approached agreed to participate for a response rate of over 60%. Overall, the procedure resulted in 179 questionnaires that were usable for analysis.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Scale Development

A principal component analysis with varimax rotation was performed on the 18 items representing the six different styles of love. Applying the eigenvalue-one criteria, the item-set was factored to ensure that items loaded on respective dimensions ($\geq .50$) and did not cross-load ($< .35$), and to estimate the percentage of variance explained. To assess the appropriateness of the correlation matrix prior to factoring, Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy were computed. Bartlett's test led to a clear rejection of the hypothesis of independence ($p < .001$) and the KMO measure of .74 (in the middling range) indicated that the application of factor analysis was appropriate.

Factoring the battery of items produced a 6-factor solution that did not entirely reproduce the six styles of love found in previous studies on interpersonal relationships (see Table 4). Six items representing both the Mania and Agape styles of love loaded on the first factor, suggesting that these two love styles are perceived as similar. One Mania item, "If I imagine someone else is riding my bike, I feel very uncomfortable," was dropped from the analysis because of a poor loading (.42). The next three factors extracted contained the 3-item subscales representing Eros, Pragma, and Storage. Loadings for the three items representing Ludus were divided among the last two factors, two items loaded on the next to last (Ludus 1) and a single item on the last factor (Ludus 2). Together, the six factors accounted for 73% of the variance in the complete set of items. It should be noted that components analyses using varimax, equimax, and oblique rotations produced the same factor profile, indicating stability in the 6-factor solution obtained.

Separate factor analyses of the 3 love and 4 loyalty items indicated that the scales are unidimensional, in both analyses all items loaded on a single factor (see Tables 5 and 6). The unidimensionality of the four loyalty items implies that respondents do not distinguish between active and passive loyalty regarding their favorite motorcycle.

Reliability and Validity

Scale reliability for each of the multi-item scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α). Applying Nunnally's (1978) criterion of .70 for exploratory research, α 's ranging from .80-.89 indicate that the scales representing Eros, Mania/Agape (i.e., the combined Mania and Agape scale), and Pragma are internally consistent. Items in these scales were summed to form composite indicators of their respective constructs. Table 4 presents loadings from an exploratory factor analysis and percentages of variance explained along with item-total correlations and α 's for the corresponding love subscales. Alpha's for the 3-item Storage scale involving long-term relations ($\alpha = .64$) and the 2-item Ludus 1 scale ($\alpha = .52$) did not

TABLE 3
Demographic Profile of the Sample (n=179) and Dummy Variable Coding

Variable	%	Variable Name(s) and Value(s)	%
Age		[Boomer, Mature]	
18-24	1.1	[0,0]	8.0
25-34	6.9		
35-44	34.9	[1,0]	69.7
45-54	34.9		
≥ 55	22.3	[0,1]	22.3
Marital Status		[Together]	
Single	22.1	[0]	39.3
Divorced	16.2		
Married	57.2	[1]	60.7
Co-habitation	3.5		
Education		[College, Grad]	
≤ High School	1.7	[0,0]	33.1
Some High School	2.3		
High School	28.7		
2-yr College	26.4	[1,0]	54.7
Vocation-Tech School	10.9		
4-yr College	16.7		
Graduate School	12.1	[0,1]	12.2
Other*	1.1		
Occupation		[White_co, Retired]	
Homemaker	0.6	[0,0]	35.4
Skilled/Semi-Skilled	26.7		
Laborer	5.2		
Farm	0.6		
Professional	34.1	[1,0]	54.7
Manager/Administrator	15.1		
Clerical	0.6		
Sales	4.1		
Retired	6.4	[0,1]	9.9
Other*	9.3		
Annual Income		[Income_c]**	
<\$20,000	2.9	[1]	27.6
\$20,000–\$39,999	24.7		
\$40,000–\$59,999	26.5	[2]	44.1
\$60,000–\$79,999	17.6		
\$80,000–\$99,999	10.0	[3]	28.2
≥ \$100,000	18.2		

* Excluded in the regression analyses.

** Ordinal index variable is used due to equal scale intervals.

meet the criterion, so these subscales were omitted from further analysis. Alpha's for the two dependent variables Love ($\alpha=.75$) and Loyalty ($\alpha=.76$) were acceptable. Tables 5 and 6 summarize the results of the factor and reliability analyses for the love and loyalty scales.

Having been successfully applied in a number of other studies (e.g., Hendrick and Hendrick 1989; Hendrick, Hendrick, and Dicke 1998; Taraban and Hendrick 1995), the Love Attitude Scale is well established as a reliable and valid measure of interpersonal romantic relationships. The instrument was field-tested on a convenience

TABLE 4
A Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis and Scale Reliability: Styles of Love (Independent Variables)

Item/Scale	Mean	Factor Loading	Explained Var. (%)	Item-Total Corr.	Alpha (α)
Mania/Agape:	4.07		21.10		.88
Sometimes I get so excited about my bike that I can't sleep.	4.05	.75		.66	
When I think about my bike, I have trouble concentrating on anything else.	3.88	.86		.81	
I would rather go without than let my bike have problems.	5.11	.77		.60	
Placing my bike's well-being before my own makes me happy.	4.06	.84		.74	
I would endure all things for the sake of my bike.	3.68	.83		.79	
Eros:	7.25		14.63		.89
My bike and I have the right physical chemistry between us.	7.40	.90		.79	
I feel that my bike and I were meant for each other.	7.15	.88		.81	
My bike fits my ideal standard of physical appearance.	7.15	.88		.73	
Pragma:	3.81		12.31		.80
A main consideration in choosing a bike is how it reflects on those close to me.	4.27	.79		.57	
One consideration in choosing a bike is how it will reflect on my career or job.	3.19	.80		.66	
I try to plan my life carefully before choosing a bike.	4.01	.83		.68	
Storage:	6.36		10.16		.64
I realized how much I loved my bike only after having it for some time.	5.86	.74		.38	
The best experience with my bike comes after spending a long time with it.	6.45	.81		.54	
My relationship with my bike is a really deep friendship.	6.77	.56		.43	
Ludus 1:	5.82		8.28		.52
I would not feel guilty to my bike if I ride other bikes.	6.10	.77		-	
I enjoy dividing my attention between a number of different bikes.	5.44	.83		-	
Ludus 2:	5.51		6.77		-
I can get over my old bike without much problem.	5.51	.91		-	

sample of 21 attendees several days before Biketoberfest was scheduled to begin. The wording of several questions was modified slightly for clarification purposes, otherwise no sign of ambiguity or misinterpretation was indicated.

Regression Analysis

Multiple regressions, with and without demographic variables, were performed using Lee's (1977) love subscales as independent variables and the overall Love and Loyalty measures as dependent variables. To facilitate interpretation of the results, many of the polychotomous classification variables were dummy coded. For example, respondents' age was recoded into three categories representing those <35, 35-54 (i.e., Boomers) and >55 (i.e., Matures) years of age, with >35 as the reference category. Table 3 also includes the coding of demographic variables used in the analyses.

Multivariate F-tests for each of the overall models reported below were significant at the .01 level or beyond. For the model without demographic variables, Mania/Agape ($\beta=.59$, $p<.001$) and Eros ($\beta=.32$, $p<.001$) were positively related to overall Love.

Length of bike ownership was significant ($\beta=.08$, $p<.05$) in addition to the love styles of Eros and Mania/Agape when demographic variables were entered. Harley-Davidson owners showed a higher level of loyalty than others ($\beta=.75$, $p<.05$) and the Eros ($\beta=.41$, $p<.001$) love style was positively related to overall Loyalty. A similar effect was obtained with respect to Eros when demographic variables were removed. None of the other variables tested were significantly related to either overall Love or Loyalty at the .05 level.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The primary objective of the study was to develop a basic framework for understanding the structure of love for a product. The study's results are largely consistent with findings on interpersonal love where Eros, Mania, and Agape were found to have the most positive impact on successful romantic interpersonal relationships (Sternberg and Grajek 1984). Overall, the findings imply that relations between bikers and their bikes is indeed a form of romantic relationship. Discussion of the findings is divided into two interre-

TABLE 5
A Summary of Factor Analysis and Scale Reliability for: Love (Dependent Variable)

Item/Scale	Mean	Factor Loading	Explained Var. (%)	Item-Total Corr.	Alpha (α)
Love:	5.82		67.15		.75
I am in love with my bike.	4.71	.83		.59	
I feel very possessive toward my bike.	6.03	.86		.65	
If I could never be on my bike, I would feel miserable.	6.72	.77		.52	

TABLE 6
A Summary of Factor Analysis and Scale Reliability for: Loyalty (Dependent Variable)

Item/Scale	Mean	Factor Loading	Explained Var. (%)	Item-Total Corr.	Alpha (α)
Loyalty:	7.51		59.00		.76
I would highly recommend my bike to my friends.	7.85	.86		.64	
I am likely to make positive comments about my bike to my friends.	7.65	.86		.64	
If my bike were to cost more to maintain, I would still continue to ride my bike.	6.77	.55		.36	
In the near future, I intend to ride more.	7.57	.75		.54	

lated parts, theoretical and practical implications for the development of romantic consumer-product relationships.

Theoretical Implications

The results of the study are interesting for two reasons. First of all, bikers do not distinguish between possessive (Mania) and selfless love (Agape), styles of love that generally do not co-exist in interpersonal love. One possible explanation is that the relationship between a product and its owner is unidirectional. Possessive love involves the assurance of love and jealousy can arise if a partner does not meet this need. Contrary to a possessive type of love, selfless love does not expect any reciprocity. These two love styles can co-exist in product love because products do not argue, get angry, or cheat on their partners. The unidirectional nature of relations with a product puts the owner in total control and reduces the anxiety about not being loved in return.

Secondly, finding that measurement items representing Ludus (game-playing love) failed to load on a solitary factor suggests that product love has a different commitment component from interpersonal love. The Ludus subscale measures openness to multiple partners (i.e., owning more than one bike) and the acceptance of a breakup (e.g., selling the bike). In interpersonal love, one who is more open to multiple partners is more likely to accept a breakup. In product love, owning multiple bikes and tolerance of a breakup are not the same component. Mean scores show that, on average, bikers have no problem owning multiple bikes, but may have some difficulty breaking up with an old bike.

Eros was a significant predictor in the regression models for both product love and loyalty. The combination Mania and Agape love style was the most important predictor of overall love, but neither style influenced loyalty. In other words, being “in love with a bike” does not necessarily imply strong attachment. Bikers love for their bikes involves feelings that are possessive (Mania), caring

(Agape), and passionate (Eros), but loyalty depends only on passionate feelings (Eros). Recall that the commitment component of product love is different from interpersonal love, owning multiple bikes and acceptance of a breakup are separate components. As a whole, then, it can be concluded that bikers are capable of loving multiple bikes simultaneously, but love for a favorite bike does not prevent falling in love with another attractive bike, even though it bears a different brand.

To some extent it is surprising that the Pragma style of love was neither related to product love nor loyalty. The Pragma love style represents self-expression and compatibility between self and the beloved, similar to symbolic or conspicuous consumption. Although bikes typically communicate the owner’s values and ideals, the compatibility component appears to be irrelevant to feelings of love or attachment.

Practical Implications

The findings also suggest marketing implications for firms wishing to form romantic consumer-product relationships. Our results suggest that products with a passionate (Eros), possessive (Mania), and selfless (Agape) image are more likely to succeed, depending upon whether love or product attachment is the desired outcome. For instance, Eros, which is often referred to as the pursuit of a lover’s “physical type” (Lee 1977, p.174), would readily translate into the design and hedonic elements of a product. It would represent the extent to which the product is perceived to fit consumers’ ideal image of beauty.

Interpreting the coexistence of Mania and Agape is more complicated. As discussed earlier, Mania is an emotionally intense love style, while Agape is guided more by reason than emotion (Lee 1977). To suggest marketing implications independently avoids explaining what a combined style of Mania and Agape love is. One possible explanation is a common denominator between Mania and

TABLE 7
A Summary of Regression Analyses: Love and Loyalty as Dependent Variables

Independent Variable	Dependent Variables							
	Love				Loyalty			
	Beta	Std. Error	Std. Beta	t	Beta	Std. Error	Std. Beta	t
1. Models without Demographic Variables								
Constant	1.36	.72		*1.88	4.32	.67		***6.45
Eros	.32	.08	.25	***4.12	.39	.07	.42	***5.38
Pragma	-.02	.06	-.02	-.27	.08	.06	.12	1.45
Mania/Agape	.59	.06	.61	***9.91	.02	.06	.02	.27
Ludus2	-.05	.05	-.06	-.92	-.01	.05	-.01	-.17
Adj. R ² =0.50, F(3,150)=38.70***				Adj. R ² =0.17, F(4,143)=8.40***				
2. Models with Demographic Variables								
Constant	1.04	1.14		.92	4.46	.93		***4.80
Eros	.24	.09	.19	**2.63	.41	.08	.48	***5.46
Pragma	-.03	.07	-.02	-.34	.04	.06	.06	.68
Mania/Agape	.61	.07	.63	***8.37	.02	.06	.03	.27
Ludus2	-.07	.06	-.08	-1.19	.00	.05	.01	.07
Harley or Not	-.19	.35	-.04	-.53	.75	.29	.23	**2.56
Long	.08	.03	.17	**2.48	-.03	.03	-.10	-1.11
Boomer	.25	.59	.05	.42	-.47	.48	-.14	-.97
Mature	.73	.68	.14	1.07	.08	.56	.02	.13
Together	-.01	.31	-.00	-.01	.12	.26	.04	.42
College	-.03	.37	-.01	-.08	.01	.30	.00	.03
Graduate	-.33	.55	-.05	-.60	.04	.45	.01	.10
White Collar	.01	.40	.00	.02	-.02	.33	-.01	-.07
Retired	-.49	.62	-.07	-.79	-.49	.53	-.10	-.92
Income	.17	.22	.06	.78	-.08	.18	-.04	-.43
Eventime	.04	.03	.09	1.17	-.03	.03	-.11	-1.23
Adj. R ² =0.471, F(15,109)=8.36***				Adj. R ² =0.197, F(15,106)=2.98***				
* p<0.10								
** p<0.05								
*** p<0.001								

Agape, the interaction between user and product. While other styles of love focus on appearance (Eros), the number of relationships (Ludus), the length of relationship (Storage), and attribute composition (Pragma), characteristics of the interaction (e.g., functional vs. hedonic interaction, need for regular maintenance, etc.) seem to be associated with how a romantic consumer-product relationship develops. Future research is required to clarify this issue.

In sum, this study offers a structural framework for understanding romantic consumer-product relationships. The application of Lee's (1977) love style typology provides a suitable departure point for a more complete understanding of the structure of product love. Empirical evidence here shows that several styles of interpersonal love apply to product love. Of course, replications of the study, namely testing the model on other products and/or categories are necessary to determine if differences or category effects exist. Other studies might focus on the personality traits associated with different love styles in Lee's typology. In this way, findings on products could be compared and contrasted with those

of interpersonal love studies in psychology. An interesting extension would an investigation of the three dimensions of love: intimacy, passion, and commitment (see Sternberg 1986) to further understand the building and structure of romantic consumer-product relationships.

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Just for Fun

A History of Mentality based Analysis of Hedonic and Experiential Consumption

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We call attention to experience orientation (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982) as an important dimension in consumer research. We do not claim that this striving for experiences is the dominant or only factor of motivation when consumers behave in the market place. But we claim that experiences have an important function for consumers when they have to evaluate the significance of products for their life. Experiences are an important component in the current perception of 'the good life'. Demographically, we assume that this striving has become much more widespread during the last decades. The reasons for this are increased economic possibilities for a greater proportion of the population and a modern form of hedonism. The experience orientation is moreover stimulated by the aesthetization of commodities that has taken place during the last century. In a sense the experience orientation is the concise answer to this aesthetization, since the consumer can use aesthetics in the construction of a coherent self.

The feelings and fantasies from which experiences originate are, however, double edged. Experiences can be joyful, but longing after experiences can result in existential doubts and a fundamental uncertainty. Actual experiences will frequently fail to match prior expectations. We have tried to reflect upon the troubles which the self-actualisation process creates for the individual and the dilemmas that the experiences-seeking individual faces. Hedonism has been given only sporadic attention in consumer research and these scarce contributions do not relate experience orientation to the constitution of the self in modern post-industrial societies. If we want to gain a more profound understanding of the importance of the construction of the consumer in the buying decision and in consumption in general, then we have to reconsider hedonism and the experience orientation. This is done through an analysis of the history of mentality with special attention to the concept of hedonism. Elias (1982, 1989) and Schulze (1992, 1997) are main sources for our inquiry into the history of mentality. It is shown that hedonism has to be divided into a traditional and a modern form (Campbell 1987). The latter represents the hedonism we are dealing with in our culture. This kind of hedonism is not just irrational behavior. Instead is it possible to get a reasonable conceptualisation of modern hedonism. This will give new insights into the sociological theory on consumption. In addition greater attention towards hedonistic aspects of consumption illuminates several areas of consumer research. We will conclude by drawing attention to four areas where the perspectives from this study can be used. Firstly, we need a systematic investigation of how daydreams influence the consumer. What does it more precisely mean for decision-making and for the evaluation of an acquisition? Secondly, there is a variety of consumer behavior that could be investigated from this perspective. What does it mean to browse in shops without buying, to haggle, or to buy second hand objects? For many these are very relevant and meaningful ways of dealing with the world of goods. But why is browsing in shops a significant joyful behavior? What do consumers expect from such behavior? What turns it into a disappointing experience? Thirdly, it is significant to throw light on when and why fantasies turn into mania, where a certain feeling is

isolated and grows into a compulsive behavior. This is known from collecting mania and compulsive buying. These obsessions could have the origin in a longing for experiences. Fourthly, it would be fruitful to investigate what a meaningful experience means for different groups of consumers. What kind of qualities do they find significant in an experience? And what kind of products do they perceive as especially suitable experiences?

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Consumer Reactions to Marketing Practices: Skepticism, Suspicion, and Payback

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SESSION OVERVIEW

There are a number of reasons to believe that consumers have become increasingly concerned about the practices of marketers. For instance, books criticizing common marketing practices, such as Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation* and Naomi Klein's *No Logo*, have become best sellers. Political groups have generated considerable consumer awareness about business practices they view as questionable. Even well-known companies that normally hold positions of high esteem have found themselves in the midst of controversy. For instance, Nike was accused of using child labor to manufacture its products, while McDonalds and Starbucks have been accused of paying their employees less than a living wage. Similar criticisms have focused on the advertising of companies like Walmart, who are accused of misleading consumers with their claim, "Always the low price—always."

Consumer trust in business has also declined noticeably. For instance, Nye et al. (1997) found that the proportion of people who are cynical of major corporations has doubled in the past 30 years. Other evidence suggests that consumer distrust focuses more on some industries than others. A recent poll by Ipsos-Reid (2003) found the advertising industry was close to the bottom in terms of consumer trust (only 17% of respondents trusted this industry), whereas the medical research industry (62%) and the tourism industry (57%) were trusted by the majority of consumers. *Advertising Standards* (a regulatory group in Canada) recorded a two fold increase in consumer complaints about advertising between 1997 and 2001 (www.adstandards.com). A similar trend has been observed in the willingness of consumers to withhold patronage from companies they perceive as engaging in political or social abuses. In fact, over 800 products are currently the target of consumer boycotts around the world.

The scrutiny that consumers exercise towards marketing can take many forms, ranging from healthy skepticism involving increased attention to the activities of the marketer, to more negative reactions involving general suspicion towards marketers, or even action against companies in the form of boycotts. Recent trends suggest a need to better understand the types of reactions consumers have towards marketing tactics. This special topics session examined consumer awareness of different marketer tactics. Each paper paid particular attention to the underlying psychological mechanisms involved. Specifically, the papers described in this session examined the skepticism, suspicion, and blame that can result when consumers learn or suspect that marketers are behaving in questionable ways. The papers also examine the behavior directed towards the target company, as well as towards marketing in general. Finally, some of the papers also examine counter-measures that marketers can use to stem these reactions.

The discussant, Meg Campbell, helped to integrate the findings of the three papers. This discussion focused on distinctions between the types of consumer reactions that tend to be evoked by ulterior motives attributed to marketers, versus the more negative reactions that tend to be evoked when marketers break important social norms of being truthful, or when they break other ethical principles. Particular attention was paid to the information processing involved in the effects that skepticism, suspicion and blame have on consumer judgment and behavior, especially the similarities and important distinctions between these processes.

"The Skeptical Shopper: How Default Options Affect Choice By What They Tell Consumers"

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Almost every consumer has encountered "defaults" when choosing among alternatives: the "default" option is the one the consumer will automatically receive if he/she does not specify otherwise. Although default options are not restricted to the Internet, the operational advantages of the Internet have made them more pervasive over the past few years. For example, on the Dell Computer website, computer systems come in a pre-packaged combination of RAM memory, hard drive size, disk-drive options, monitor, software, etc. However, if the consumer prefers a bigger hard drive, or a small monitor, she may adapt the package to her preferences by selecting her preferred attribute option from a menu. More notoriously, almost every reader of this article will have encountered the "opt-out" e-mail list, in which the consumer condemns herself to a lifetime of promotional emails unless she takes the time to "deselect" the "send me emails" box.

In this article we argue that consumers may also treat default designations *as though they contain relevant information about the value of the product* (Prelec, Wernerfelt, and Zettelmeyer 1997; Wernerfelt 1995); i.e., when our preferences are uncertain, we look to defaults to tell us something about them. In particular, in some important circumstances a consumer might conclude that the default option *is the one the marketer prefers to sell*. In other words, the default is a marketing tactic that is interpreted by a consumer's "marketplace metacognition" (Wright 2002), his/her social intelligence about marketplace behavior (for example why and how marketers attempt to manipulate the behavior of consumers). We demonstrate that how the consumer responds to the default depends on whether this social intelligence is invoked and *what it means to the consumer* once invoked. Specifically, we show that how the consumer responds to the default will depend on 1) the ordinal position of the default (i.e., whether or not a less-expensive or more-expensive alternative is the designated default), 2) whether or not a consumer's marketing metacognition is readily accessible, and 3) whether or not a consumer is motivated and able to use marketing metacognition to interpret the meaning of the default.

Importantly, our view of "defaults as a source of marketplace information," filtered through a consumer's prior knowledge of the marketplace, suggests different empirical results than would default effects generated by inattentiveness on the consumer's part (Johnson et al. 2002) or by processing biases such as loss aversion, anchoring-and-adjustment (Park et al. 2000), and focus-of-comparison effects (Dhar and Simonson 1992). A story based on inattentiveness, anchoring, or focus-of-comparison should apply equally to low (less expensive) and high (more expensive) defaults. A story based on loss aversion suggests that a high default will be more powerful (i.e., more effective in changing choice) than a low default. These previous researchers are undoubtedly correct in their assessment that incomplete or biased processing helps make consumers more likely to choose default items in many circumstances. However, when defaults are information-based, we will show that *low (i.e., less expensive) defaults can sometimes be more powerful than high (more expensive) defaults*. Even more remarkably, information-based defaults may create negative or "backfire" effects: if

a consumer believes a marketer is suggesting a default that appears to be in the firm's best interests but not the consumer's interests, consumers may be *less* likely to choose an alternative when it is the default than when no default is indicated.

In our story about default effects, then, the consumer is not inattentive but skeptical and alert, reflecting that defaults can invoke the marketplace metacognition of the consumer to help him/her better predict the value of each alternative (Friestad and Wright 1994, Wright 2002). We present three studies to support our information-based explanation for default effects. In Study 1, we suggest circumstances in which low (less expensive) defaults may be more powerful than high (more expensive) defaults. In Study 2, we show that the strength and direction of the default effect depends on whether or not "marketplace metacognition" is clearly invoked, and whether or not subjects see the marketer as acting for or against the self-interest of the consumer. In Study 3, we distinguish marketplace metacognition from expertise, and show that information-based default effects depend on whether the consumer is motivated and able to use his/her marketplace metacognition to interpret that information.

"One Rotten Apple Spoils the Barrel: Advertising Deception, Defensive Processing, and Consumer Suspicion"

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Prior research has identified a number of types of advertising claims that are capable of misleading consumers, such as incomplete comparisons and implied superiority claims (Burke et al. 1997; Johar 1995; Shimp and Preston 1981). The current research builds on this work by examining how consumers respond once they discover they have been misled by an ad. In everyday life, consumers may discover an ad is misleading in a number of ways, for instance by detecting the falsehood on the basis of prior experience with the product, by examining the product after seeing the ad and discovering it does not live up to claims, or by learning of the deception through corrective advertising. In general, we propose that such claim-fact discrepancies (Gardner 1975) are likely to lead consumers to become *defensive*, in the sense they become broadly *suspicious* towards future advertising claims.

We investigated this idea in a series of experiments. The general procedure used in all studies was to manipulate the deceptiveness of an initial ad, and then examine the effects this deception had on attitudes and information processing relating to a second advertisement. According to the procedure, all subjects were given an initial ad that included claims suggesting the target product was of high quality. Subjects evaluated the product by rating its quality on a number of dimensions, and their responses indicated they generally viewed the product positively. Then, under the guise of an apparent debriefing for the first part of the study, the experimenter told subjects in the *deception condition* that *Consumer Reports* had tested the target product and found that it was actually one of the worst models on the market. Control subjects also saw the initial ad and evaluated the product, but this group was not given any additional information about the target product's performance. Manipulation checks confirmed that the initial ad was viewed as deceptive and also led subjects to feel fooled by the ad, relative to controls. Finally, all subjects were asked to evaluate a second ad. The main measures were attitudes towards the target product in the second ad, and cognitive elaborations of the contents of the ad. Measures of consumer suspicion were also included to test for mediation.

According to dual process theory (Chaiken and Trope 1999), the initial deception was likely to cause consumers to become

defensive towards further attempts at persuasion. That is, having been fooled once should make consumers more wary of being persuaded later. Five experiments generally confirmed this prediction by showing that deceptive advertising produced a negative bias in attitudes towards subsequent advertising messages by causing consumers to engage in a combination of *defensive systematic processing* and *defensive heuristic processing*. The findings further showed that consumer defensiveness not only applied to the original source of deception, but was also capable of generalizing from one advertiser to the next. These more generalized effects of deception occurred by increasing the level of suspicion consumers felt towards advertising as a whole, in accordance with a heuristic process known as *defensive stereotyping* (Kunda and Sinclair 1999). The evidence also argued against other potential mediators, such as negative affect and uncertainty. Evidence for the self-protective nature of these reactions was provided in a final experiment, which showed that the negative bias in judgment occurred only when the subjects were the direct victims of advertising deception, and not when subjects learned that other consumers had been the victims of deception.

We also varied the characteristics of the second ad, as well as the source of that ad, in order to identify whether consumer suspicion was more or less likely to generalize under these circumstances. These manipulations included: the strength of supportive advertising claims given in the second ad (strong vs weak arguments), the plausibility of a price discount claim (plausible vs exaggerated), and the prior reputation of the second advertiser (trusted vs unknown). In general, the suspicion that was induced by the initial advertising deception was rather robust, in that a negative bias was observed for every version of the second ad we used. Consumer suspicions also generalized to different product categories, to brand name products, and to ads from a different geographical location.

These findings largely supported the predictions of the dual process framework (Chaiken and Trope 1999), and the heuristic-systematic model in particular (Chen and Chaiken 1999). The results are also compatible with predictions made by other information processing models, especially the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM; Friestad and Wright 1994). This concerns the ways in which consumers interpret, evaluate and respond to marketers' persuasion attempts, as well as the idea that consumers can be defensive towards marketers. The current research provides empirical verification of that consumers can be defensive, and further shows that the scope of these effects can be rather broad. Our research also adds to PKM by identifying deceptive advertising as an important source of consumer defensiveness, and by providing additional ideas about the processes by which such effects may occur (e.g., through defensive stereotyping).

The implication for marketers is that false advertising can seriously undermine the effectiveness of further advertising communications. Given the extent to which consumer suspicions are shown to generalize, marketers should be concerned about the deceptive practices of other advertisers, not only with respect to their immediate competitors, but also with respect to deception that occurs in other product categories, and even in other markets. Our results show that suspicion can generalize across these factors. The findings also imply marketers cannot simply assume they are immune to the effects of false advertising so long as they avoid such practices themselves, or because they have built a positive reputation with consumers in the past. The suspicions of consumers were also shown to apply to such marketers. A potential solution to avoiding consumer suspicion in the first place is for advertisers to use an *expectations screening procedure* similar to the one pro-

posed by Gardner (1975), to help ensure that the products live up to the expectations created by ads, and thereby avoid generating consumer suspicion.

“The Effects of Pro-Boycott and Anti-Boycott Communications on the Individual Boycott Decision”

Vicki Morwitz, New York University

Sankar Sen, Boston University

Boycotts have become a pervasive and potent expression of consumer discontent in today's marketplace. Consumers are increasingly willing to withhold patronage to curb perceived market abuses and/or increase corporate sensitivity to their economic, political, and social concerns. Today, over 800 products, not to mention whole states and countries, are current targets for boycotts worldwide. Prior research (Sen, Gurhan-Canli and Morwitz 2001) has drawn on social dilemma theory and reference group theory to demonstrate that consumers' likelihood of participating in both economic and social-issue boycotts is jointly determined by their perceptions of the boycott's likelihood of success, their susceptibility to normative influence and the costs they incur in boycotting. More specifically, consumers' success perceptions are determined by factors such as their expectations of overall participation and efficacy, as well as the message frame inherent in pro-boycott communication whereas the costs they incur in boycotting are determined by their preference for the boycotted product and the availability of substitutes.

This paper builds on our understanding of the individual boycott decision by examining the effects of both pro-boycott (i.e. from the boycotting organization) and anti-boycott (i.e. from the boycott target) messages on consumers' boycott decisions. The importance of understanding such communication effects is underscored by both marketers' (i.e. the boycott targets) and boycott organizers' scant knowledge about the characteristics of effective boycott-related communication, which is perhaps the most important and often only instrument of persuasion at their disposal. Like prior research in this domain, this paper draws on social dilemma theory to test the relative effectiveness of three different types of pro-boycott messages on consumers' willingness to participate in an actual boycott of a prominent U.S. package-goods company over the issue of animal testing. The three messages focus on the benefits of boycotting, the likelihood of boycott success, and the costs (or lack thereof) of boycotting (i.e. by stressing the availability of substitutes) respectively. Moreover, we examine the effects of both consumers' exposure to an anti-boycott message from the marketer as well as its order relative to the pro-boycott message. We also build on past research on corporate social responsibility (Sen and Bhattacharya 1991) by examining how consumers' perceptions of the degree of congruence between them and the boycotted firm affects their willingness to boycott and their reaction to boycott-related communications.

We test for these effects in an experimental study that has a 3 (pro-boycott message type: 1=boycott benefits, 2=boycott success likelihood, 3=product substitutability) x 3 (anti-boycott message order: 1=no anti-boycott message, 2=anti-boycott message *before* pro-boycott message, 3=anti-boycott message *after* pro-boycott message) between subjects design. Aside from obtaining respondents' boycott intentions, we also obtained their ratings of boycott issue importance, their attributions regarding the cause(s) underlying the boycott call, their beliefs, in general, about boycotts and their beliefs about the relationship between socially responsible actions on the part of marketers and their ability to make high quality products. In a survey administered separately from and prior to the main experiment, we also obtained the same respondent set's preference for and loyalty to the boycott target's products, its

susceptibility to interpersonal influence and its identification with both the boycotting organization and the boycott target (i.e. the company).

Our results suggest that pro and anti-boycott communications can influence consumers' boycott participation decisions. We find that pro-boycott communications are most effective when they provide information about how to reduce the costs associated with boycotting (i.e., by providing information about available substitutes). However communications provided by the boycotted firm can reduce or in some cases eliminate the effect of pro-boycott communications. In addition, consistent with past research on corporate social responsibility, we find consumers' perceptions of congruence between their own characteristics and that of the boycotted firm also affect their willingness to boycott. Although intuitively one might expect customers who perceive high congruence to a boycotted firm to be more immune to pro-boycott communications, we find instead that customers who perceive a high degree of congruence with the boycotted firm are more likely, in the face of pro-boycott communications to participate in the boycott. Finally we find that consumers' attributions concerning cause(s) underlying the boycott call mediate the effects of pro- and anti-boycott communications and consumers' perceptions of congruence with the boycotted firm on consumers' likelihood of boycotting. Specifically consumers' perceptions of congruence with the boycotted firm affect their attributions (the greater the overlap with the boycotted firm the more likely consumers are to believe the cause of the boycott is controllable by someone, related to factors inside of the boycotted firm and says something about the boycotted firm). Pro- and anti-boycott communications affect whether consumers believe the cause of the boycott is related to factors inside of the boycotted firm. These attributions in turn affect consumers' willingness to boycott. Overall consumers are more likely to boycott when they believe the cause for the boycott call is controllable by someone, related to factors inside the boycotted firm and when it says someone about the boycotted firm.

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ROUNDTABLE
Planting the Seed of Consumer Behavior in Latin America: Is it Time for ACR-Latin America?

Silvia Gonzalez, ITESM
David Luna, CUNY

Participants in this roundtable session discussed the roles that ACR-Latin America would play in the development of academic consumer research in Latin American countries. There seems to be some interest among academics in the area, but there are barriers to the development of consumer research. For example, there is a lack of funds to travel to the United States for conferences like ACR and a lack of experience with social science research.

Attendees to the session discussed, among others, a possible role for the organization in coordinating doctoral student and faculty exchanges, workshops, and symposia in Latin American countries held jointly by U.S. and Latin American scholars. The session focused on brain-storming regarding a possible Latin American conference in 2006. It was concluded that holding a conference in Latin America is crucial to attract attention and get people involved. Pros and cons of different locations for the conference were discussed. The attendees suggested that a research symposium and a doctoral consortium should be held in conjunction with the conference. Also, we discussed the possibility of tapping into other fields (psychology, anthropology,...) in Latin-American universities in order to attract academics trained in social science research methodologies to consumer research.

The session concluded with the objective of setting up a discussion forum to further discuss possible conference locations. A Program Committee should be formed by early 2004. Also, we should propose reserving a special session in the 2004 North American ACR conference for Latin-American scholars to present their work. This last point would address the perception among marketing academics that Latin American researchers should have a better representation in ACR.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The Role of Unconscious Processes in Consumer Choice and Decision Making

Kyeongheui Kim, University of Minnesota

Robert S. Wyer Jr., Hong Kong University of Science & Technology

SESSION OVERVIEW

Despite the growing evidence of unconscious influences in social cognition research, this new stream of research has only recently been applied in consumer contexts. This session intended to provide an integrative view of the current work in this area and to serve as a catalyst to spark collaborative research among people in consumer behavior and psychology.

The session had two major objectives. The first was to uncover the role of unconscious processes in consumer behavior by investigating the behavioral effects of unconscious processes, assessing the cognitive mechanisms that underlie the unconscious influences, and identifying boundary conditions for the effects. The three papers in this session combined diverse theoretical approaches in an effort to achieve this objective. The second objective was to encourage research on this issue. This session had been developed to appeal to a variety of perspectives and research approaches by examining the issue from different angles. Two of the papers employed conscious priming methods and experiments, while one used subliminal priming and experimental games. Moreover, each paper used different styles of primes such as goals, stereotypes, and traits, and incorporated several moderating factors such as the types of choices (choice for the self vs. for others) and dispositional factors (social value orientation and consistency).

Theoretically, the proposed session should advance the research on consumer choice and decision making by shedding light on the important and substantial role played by unconscious processes in consumer contexts. Moreover, three papers, each of which was collaborated by consumer researchers and psychologists, should benefit to broaden our perspective on unconscious processes in consumer contexts. Furthermore, by incorporating different types of priming and experimental methods, it should make a significant methodological contribution to consumer research on behavior.

“Effects of Nonconscious Goal Priming on Consumer Choice Behavior”

Baba Shiv, University of Iowa

Joel Huber, Duke University

Tanya Chartrand, Ohio State University

What sets goal pursuit into motion? Perhaps the most intuitively appealing and compelling answer is that we do. Reflecting this, most models of self-regulation posit continuous, conscious choice and guidance as a central feature, if not the core foundation, of goal pursuit. However, goal pursuit does not always involve deliberate direction of goal-driven behavior. Sometimes goal pursuit occurs outside of one's awareness, intent, and even control. In the current research, we explore whether consumers can have goals related to purchasing behavior that are nonconsciously activated, and automatically guide subsequent consumer cognition and behavior. Our results suggest the answer is a clear yes.

“About Prisoner's and Dictators: The Role of Subliminally Presented Stereotype Primes and Social Value Orientation in Shaping Cooperative Behavior”

Dirk Smeesters, Tilburg University

Luk Warlop, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Vincent Yzerbyt, Université Catholique de Louvain

Olivier Corneille, Université Catholique de Louvain

Eddy Van Avermaet, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

The present research examines the effects of situation (stereotype primes) and person factors (social value orientation and consistency) on cooperative behavior in various experimental games. Results indicated that the main and joint influences of these situation and person factors on cooperative choices depend on the nature of the game (prisoner's dilemma vs. dictator game). Social value orientation, consistency, and primes only affect cooperative behavior in a dictator game, while these factors also lead to rumination about partner's personality (and therefore to different cooperative choices) in a prisoner's dilemma game. Differences between these games were explained in terms of other- and self-focus.

“Effects of Priming on Product Choices for the Self versus for Others”

Jongwon Park, Korea University

Kyeongheui Kim, University of Minnesota

Junsik Kwak, Korea University

Irene Blair, University of Colorado at Boulder

It is well documented that priming can have a substantial effect not only on perceptions of other persons, but also on one's own behavior. For the most part these two effects have been considered separately. The goal of our present research is to investigate priming effects on both social perception and self behavior in a single experiment using a consumer choice paradigm. Participants in Study 1 were administered an initial task in which either concepts associated with “wasteful” was unobtrusively primed or not. Then, in an ostensibly unrelated study, they read information about two automobiles (“luxury” model and “basic” model) with an objective of making a choice between the two either for themselves or for someone else unknown (*choice objective*: self/others). The results confirmed that priming can have different effects on choices made for the self versus for others. Finally, Study 2 is to provide insights into the underlying processes that mediate the findings in Study 1.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

When What I Think Feel And Do Depends on Who I Am: Identity Effects on Judgment, Choice and Self-Reinforcement

Americus Reed II, University of Pennsylvania

SESSION OVERVIEW

Every consumer has the potential to socially identify with others on a multitude of variables including shared traits, matching avocations, common political affiliations, similar religious beliefs, and common ethnic heritage (cf. Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, and Ethier 1995). In fact, throughout the life course, socialization within a culture causes a person to become aware of the infinite number of social identities that may be potential bases for self-definition. Some are more permanent (e.g., mother, daughter, friend, African-American, etc.) while others may be more transitory (e.g., Republican, athlete, graduate student etc.). These identities can influence judgment, behavior and performance. For example, black females for whom ethnic (female) identity was salient had more favorable (unfavorable) perceptions of OJ Simpson's innocence (Newman, Duff, Schnopp-Wyatt, Brock & Hoffman, 1997). Similarly, Asian-American women's math test scores improved when their ethnic identity was activated, but worsened when their gender identity was activated (Shih, Pittinsky & Ambady, 1999).

Social identity may be the basis by which consumers think about various actions or judgments (Reed II 2002). Past research suggests that identity effects on judgment appear to depend upon the salience of the identity, its self-importance (or strength of identification), and its relevance to the judgment object. Although more and more research on identity is continuing to emerge, the implications of identity for consumer judgment and decision-making are only beginning to attract conceptual and empirical investigation (cf. Flemming & Petty, 1999). Several important questions remain. For example, what are the implications of forming a consumer judgment based on identity in terms of belief perseverance and attitude change? How and when do potentially differentially salient identities impact consumer choice? Finally, how does a judgment based on a consumer's identity bi-directionally reinforce the structure of the person's social self-schema? These three questions are directly addressed in the three papers in this special session.

The first paper (Bolton and Reed) examines the fundamental proposition that identity judgments can create sticky priors than analytic thinking; i.e., a procedural bias in favor of the initial identity judgment. Moreover, the authors investigate the effectiveness of various techniques to undo identity-driven judgment effects, including counter-reasoning, counter-identification and social influence. Their findings attest to the power of identity in judgment. The second project (LeBoeuf & Shafir) examines the effects of identity salience on choice. The current results paint a picture of malleable preferences that is quite inconsistent with the normative requirement that preferences be globally-considered and unaffected by irrelevant particulars of a given consumer decision situation. These findings extend prior work by demonstrating that even when the choice description, method of elicitation, and number of alternatives are held constant, preferences remain malleable due in part to peoples' malleable self-concepts. The final paper (Forehand, Reed & Perkins) uses the implicit association test in an identity context to capture identity accessibility as a function of the social context and to test how the extent to which expressing a particular identity-driven consumer judgment reinforces or diffuses the strength of association between evaluative traits linked to the identity and the consumer's implicit sense of self.

"Sticky Priors: Identity Effects on Judgment"

Lisa Bolton, *The Wharton School*

Americus Reed, II, *The Wharton School*

Extended Abstract

Social cognition research suggests that the self and its multiple identities represent a complex and highly elaborate knowledge structure in memory (cf. Kihlstrom & Kleine, 1995). The assumption is that identity activates an elaborate and integrated schema that is relevant to the self, frames the target of judgment and drives thinking that incorporates aspects of the self that are linked to the social category. Because people gain subjective validity that their judgments are "correct" to the extent that similar others agree with them, identity-driven processing is likely to lead to judgments in which people are more confident in predictions about future self-relevant attitudes and behavior (Markus, Smith & Moreland, 1985). Hence, identity-driven judgments may be resistant to change (Markus, 1977). The aforementioned arguments suggest that identity driven processing may reflect one-sided reasoning driven by the perspective linked to a single identity—in contrast to more analytic judgments that apply reasoning in a relatively evenhanded manner. We examine whether identity-driven thinking and subsequent identity-based judgments are a source of sticky priors. Once an elaborate and self-integrated schema triggers an initial identity-based judgment, it may be difficult to "undo" by reasoning from an alternative perspective.

We examine this question in four experiments. In all experiments, people are asked to reason about a judgment object or an issue from the perspective of a salient social identity. We employ various kinds of identities (e.g., parent, teenager; businessperson, environmentalist) linked to different objects and issues (e.g., Internet censorship; pollution credits, electronic books). We examine the persistence of identity-based judgments after engaging in subsequent analytic thinking intended to counter the initial identity-driven judgment. In experiment 1, we investigate "inoculation" and test whether identity effects are reduced if preceded by analytic thinking. In experiment 2, we examine the extent to which self-generated analytic reasoning can counteract an initial identity-based judgment. In experiment 3, we explore the use of "dueling identities" in judgment of diagnostic and non-diagnostic targets. Finally, in experiment 4, the perseverance of identity-based judgments in the face of social influence from others is investigated.

Overall, our findings support the perseverance of identity effects on judgment. Strong identities lead to identity-driven thinking and judgment that resists subsequent corrective analytic techniques. Our findings are consistent with several aspects of the literature. For example, van Knippenberg and Wilke (1992) suggested that people are more interested in information expressing in-group attitudes than information not about their group (Flemming & Petty, 1999). This research suggests that people should perceive self-generated identity-based arguments as stronger and more valid and thus more persuasive than non-identity-based arguments—when identification is strong. For example, in the attitude literature, Terry and Hogg (1996) found that perceived norms linked to a behaviorally relevant reference group ("regular exercisers") influenced intentions to engage in exercise, but only for subjects who identified with the group (Terry and Hogg 1996, experiment one;

see also Madrigal, 2001; Ybarra and Trafimow 1998; Gerald and Hoyt 1974; Cota and Dion 1986). Not only will strength of identity influence the effect of group norms on attitudes and intentions, but also the extent to which such attitudes are resistant to counter-influence. For example, Markus argued that some people are highly schematic on certain trait dimensions and people who are self-schematic are more resistant to information that contradicts their self-concepts (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Our results confirm the perseverance of judgments driven by a social identity strongly linked to the self and the relative ineffectiveness of subsequent efforts to counteract the stickiness of identity judgments.

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"Preference Reversals from Identity-Salience Shifts"

Robyn A. LeBoeuf, University of Florida
Eldar Shafir, Princeton University

Extended Abstract

People hold numerous social identities that stem from a variety of sources, including group memberships, societal roles, and demographic characteristics. For example, a working woman may be a lawyer, but may also be a mother, a daughter, an American, a

Christian, and so on. The salience of these identities is thought to fluctuate, with certain cues having the ability to alter the salience of a person's identities at any given time. Theories of the self-concept, particularly self-categorization theory (e.g., Turner, 1987), predict that attitudes and values will align with the momentarily salient identity. Thus, a person may adopt "motherhood" values when her "mother" identity is salient, but her work environment, for example, may provoke a shift in salience, leading values to align instead with a professional identity. In line with such theories, we predict that people's expressed preferences will fluctuate as identity salience fluctuates; this is in contrast to standard assumptions that a person carries around a unique, and fairly consistent and stable, preference ordering.

An initial demonstration took advantage of two conflicting identities held by our participants, undergraduate college students. On the one hand, these students are novice academics who wish to engage in intellectual pursuits; on the other hand, they form part of social groups devoted to leisure and fun. Participants completed a variety of unrelated tasks over the course of an hour; among these were an identity-salience manipulation and a preference assessment task (these were structured to look quite different from each other to prevent any suspicion of connection between the tasks). A series of open-ended questions was designed to highlight for students either their scholar or their socialite identities. In a seemingly unrelated task, participants were then invited to make several choices among newspapers, magazines, and movies. Across four different choices, preferences assimilated to the salient identity; that is, preferences were reliably more scholarly and serious when a scholar, as opposed to a socialite, identity had been made salient. A follow-up study replicated this effect using a different identity-salience manipulation and slightly different dependent measures.

We then expanded on the initial findings by investigating whether cultural identities could be manipulated to effect preference change. The participants, who had been born in China but had lived approximately half of their lives in the US, responded to questions designed to trigger either their American or their Chinese identities. They then completed several choice tasks, including a Prisoner's Dilemma game, that assessed preferences for individualism versus collectivism. Overall, those for whom the American identity had been made salient expressed preferences congruent with an American stereotype (e.g., preferences for individualism), whereas those for whom the Chinese identity had been evoked expressed preferences congruent with a Chinese stereotype (e.g., preferences for conformity and collectivism).

Two other experiments explored whether *identity* plays a privileged role in these identity-salience effects. To the extent that identity plays a pivotal role, the pattern of effects should depend upon participants' levels of identification with the evoked identities. To investigate this, we manipulated the salience of undergraduates' scholar and socialite identities and separately measured these students' levels of identification with those identities. Preferences for consumer goods only assimilated to the salient identity for those who identified with at least one of the two target identities. For those low in identification with both identities, there was a reliable contrast effect, with preferences being more stereotypically social after the scholar, as opposed to the socialite, identity was made salient. Level of identification therefore moderated the incidence of identity-congruent preference reversals.

We continued the exploration of the role played by identity by investigating the impact of an identity-salience manipulation for people who do not actually hold the evoked identity. We recruited businesspeople, all of whom had an occupational identity, but only half of whom had a nuclear family (i.e., were married or had

children). We attempted to make salient either family or occupational identities, and we then assessed preferences for spending time at work or with family. Preferences were indeed more family-oriented following the family-identity elicitation than the occupational-identity elicitation, but this was true only for those who had nuclear families, and thus, family identities. This suggests that a person actually needs to hold the evoked identity before preferences can assimilate to it; this is in contrast to certain behavioral priming effects in which behaviors (e.g., walking speed, Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996) assimilate to all manner of non-held identities. These last two experiments suggest that identity plays a key role in the observed preference assimilation patterns, as the pattern of effects will depend upon a person's relationship to the evoked identity.

Taken together, these studies show that preferences are affected by identity-salience manipulations; in particular, when an identity that a person holds and identifies with is evoked, preferences will assimilate to that identity. While these findings are clearly relevant to self-categorization theory, they also inform research on preference inconsistency, as they paint a picture of malleable preferences that contrasts with standard assumptions of preference stability. The findings extend prior work in the area of behavioral decision making by demonstrating that even when choice description, method of elicitation, and number of alternatives are held constant, preferences remain malleable due in part to peoples' malleable self-concepts.

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"Identity Reinforcement: The Dynamic Effects of Evaluation on Implicit Self-Concept"

Mark Forehand, University of Washington
Andrew Perkins, University of Washington
Americus Reed II, The Wharton School

Abstract

A great deal of research demonstrates that accessible and self-important social identities affect judgments in predictable ways, but relatively less research has investigated the processes that underlie the accessibility of one's identity and the likelihood that an identity will be utilized in the formation of consumer preferences. Recent research has identified three main classes of variables that may influence identity accessibility: enduring traits such as strength of identification with a specific identity, aspects of the social context in which a consumer resides, and contextual primes that can activate or prompt identity-based processing (Forehand & Deshpande 1999). The present research attempts to expand our understanding of the interactive nature of these disparate sources of identity accessibility. Moreover, it proposes that the use of accessible identities in the evaluation of consumer products and services can create a feedback loop that reinforces the core identity itself. The interactive nature of these sources of identity accessibility and the process by which identity-based attitude expression reinforces

identity are demonstrated in three experiments using both explicit measures of identity accessibility and the Implicit Association Test or IAT (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwarz 1998).

In the first two experiments, consumer sensitivity to situational manipulations of distinctiveness (McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka 1978) was assessed using standard explicit self-report measures and using IATs. The IATs measured the degree to which each participant associated the self with identity-related concepts and thereby provided implicit measures of identity accessibility. Specifically, both experiments conducted two sets of IATs, one to assess the accessibility of gender as a component of the individual's self concept and one to assess the accessibility of ethnicity as a component of the individual's self-concept. In these first two experiments, participants initially completed a battery of demographic items, personality scale items, and self-identity IATs to provide baseline measures of their prevailing identity accessibility. Several weeks after this initial measurement, the respondents participated in an ostensibly unrelated experiment in which the composition of the participant's immediate social environment was either measured (Experiment 1) or manipulated (Experiment 2). It was hypothesized that participant identity accessibility during this second session would be influenced not only by the respondent's distinctiveness within their immediate social context, but also by their general sensitivity to such social information (as measured using Snyder's self-monitoring scale). The results confirmed that the social distinctiveness did influence both explicit and implicit identity accessibility, and that the influence of distinctiveness on identity accessibility was moderated by the respondent's predisposition toward self-monitoring. Specifically, high self-monitors were influenced by social cues to a greater extent than were low-self-monitors. This pattern of results was observed on both explicit and implicit measures of identity accessibility.

In the third experiment, we assessed the degree to which the expression of an identity-based preference reinforces identity accessibility. It is hypothesized that the use of one's identity as an informational cue in attitude expression reinforces the accessibility of that identity and thereby increases the likelihood that the identity will be used in subsequent judgments. To test this hypothesis, an experiment was conducted in which participants evaluated identity-relevant stimuli (an advertisement for vitamins intended for either children, young adults, or seniors) and then completed an Implicit Association Test that measured the participant's self-association with youth. Compared to participants who evaluated the young adult version of the ad (the control condition), participants who evaluated either the children-focused ad or the senior-focused ad demonstrated stronger associations between the self and youth. This finding suggests that the use of an identity in an evaluation activates pre-existing identity associations. Since the majority of consumers possess pre-existing strong associations between the self and youth (Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwald 2002), this identity activation increased the observed association between self and youth.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

You Done Me Wrong (And That Ain't Right): The Role of Betrayal in Consumer Behavior

Andrew D. Gershoff, Columbia University

SESSION OVERVIEW

When pivotal expectations of a trust are violated then betrayal may be experienced (Elavgovan & Shapirio 1998). While betrayal has been studied in relationships among individuals (Buunk 1982) and between individuals and employers (Morrison & Robinson 1997), only recently have we begun to examine the role of betrayal in consumer behavior (Koehler & Gershoff 2003; Price, Bardhi & Arnould 2002).

This session contributed to our understanding of role of betrayal in consumer behavior by investigating antecedents of betrayal (violations of expectations and relationship norms), moderators of effects of betrayal (degree of norm violation, type of norm violation, betrayers' recovery attempts, type of betrayal experienced, decision frame factors, and deciding for oneself or for others), and consequences of betrayal (fleeing the relationship, negative word-of-mouth, and acceptance of increased risk).

Keith Niedermeier, first presented a paper coauthored with Yoshinori Fujikawa and William T. Ross, Jr. entitled *Betrayal in Consumer-Retailer Relationships*. This paper investigates expectations of relationship norms associated with price setting policies by retailers, and how the extent and type of relationship norm that is violated influences the betrayal experienced and subsequent behaviors. Two completed studies were presented. In the first study they find that post-purchase discovery of a lower price leads to greater intention to voice complaints, exit the relationship, and spread negative word of mouth when the lower price is found to be offered by the retailer in a separate channel as opposed to by a competitor. These behaviors are found to be mediated by feelings of betrayal. In the second study they find that the degree of norms violated moderates the feelings of betrayal while the type of norms violated moderates the subsequent behavioral intentions.

Linda Price then presented a paper coauthored with Eric Arnould and Fleura Bardhi entitled *Service Providers' Road to 'Hell': Service Betrayal, Consequences and Recovery Attempts*. This paper examines the effects of service failures involving betrayal on the effectiveness of service recovery attempts. Two completed studies were presented. In their first study they manipulated whether or not the service failure involves a betrayal and whether or not there is an existing commercial relationship with the provider. Betrayal had a substantial impact on negative emotions, feelings of injustice, dissatisfaction, revenge and other behavioral intentions. A pre-existing relationship tempered responses to both failure and betrayal. A pre-existing relationship also influences the type of negative emotions experienced following failure and betrayal. Study 2 examined whether service organizations can recover from betrayal by employing a full recovery strategy of apology, compensation and taking responsibility as suggested in the services management literature. Recovery had a significant positive impact on emotions, feelings of justice, satisfaction and behavioral intentions for both service failure and betrayal. However, significant differences between failure and betrayal remain even following a full recovery attempt. This has important implications for how organizations avoid and recover from service betrayal, as compared to service failure.

The third paper entitled *Avoiding Betrayal Over Choosing Safety? The Moderating Effects of Type of Betrayal, Type of Choice, and Choosing for Others on Betrayal Aversion* was presented by Andrew Gershoff, coauthored with Jonathan Koehler.

While the first two papers examined how betrayal affects consumers' behavioral intentions after a betrayal occurs, this paper examined consumer decisions prior to the occurrence of betrayal where only a probability of betrayal exists. Three studies were presented that examined how consumers make choices for safety products that have a very small risk of betraying by causing the very harm for which they are employed to prevent. In the first study they replicate their prior betrayal aversion finding: Consumers choose and prefer safety devices (airbags) with higher overall risks of death in order to avoid very small probabilities of betrayal. This study also makes the distinction between an active betrayal (an airbag with a small probability of causing death by the force of its deployment) and a passive betrayal (an airbag with a small probability of causing death by failing to deploy) and finds that active compared to passive betrayals are perceived as more egregious and are more avoided in choice. A second study finds that betrayal aversion can be attenuated when avoiding the betrayal means choosing no safety device at all. The third study finds that betrayal aversion is decreased and overall safer options are selected when the consumer chooses for someone other than him or herself.

"Betrayal in Consumer-Retailer Relationships"

Yoshinori Fujikawa, Penn State University

Keith E. Niedermeier, Penn State University

William T. Ross, Jr., Penn State University

The present research investigates the role of betrayal in consumer-retailer relationships. Betrayal has been studied primarily in person-person and employee-organization relationships, but less in consumer-firm relationships (with a few exceptions, e.g., Price, Bardhi & Arnould, 2002). Extant literature on close relationships and organization behavior defines betrayal as a perceived violation of a psychological contract by another (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). A psychological contract is one's belief about reciprocal obligations between oneself and another. Research further indicates that a psychological contract is often assumed by one side (e.g., employee), without the need for agreement by the other (e.g., employer). Applying this conceptualization to the current context, we define consumer betrayal as a perceived violation of a consumer's psychological contract with a retailer.

In the current research, we focus on investigating the role of betrayal in consumers' post-purchase reactions to cross-channel price differences, which is an increasingly common phenomenon. As many retailers now operate across multiple channels (e.g., stores, websites, and catalogs), they often do not standardize their marketing offerings across channels for strategic, organizational, or operational reasons. Compared to finding a lower price at a different retailer (the between-retailer condition), we argue that consumers are more likely to perceive a lower price at a different channel of the same retailer (the within-retailer condition) as violation of their psychological contract with the retailer and therefore experience feelings of betrayal. Betrayed consumers should react to the retailer by engaging in voice, exit, and negative word-of-mouth behaviors (Richins 1983). In other words, we predict that betrayal mediates the effect of post-purchase price differences on behavioral intentions.

We further theorize that consumers' feelings of betrayal and behavioral consequences will be moderated by perceived relationship norms that consumers apply to a particular retailer. Past

research in social psychology has identified two types of relationship norms: communal and exchange (Clark & Mills, 1979). Communal and exchange relationships differ in terms of the norms that govern reciprocal behaviors. In communal relationships, a person gives benefits to improve the welfare of the other, while expecting the partner to follow the same norm. In contrast, in exchange relationships, an individual provides benefits in response to past favors or in expectation of future repayments, while expecting the other to reciprocate similarly.

By applying relationship norms to consumer-retailer context, we predict that the *degree* of relationship norm will moderate consumers' feelings of betrayal, whereas the *type* of relationship norm will moderate behavioral consequences. First, in both communal and exchange relationships, the more strongly consumers expect a retailer to follow the norm, the more betrayed they should feel in the within-retailer condition. Our rationale for this prediction is that consumers in both types of relationship perceive the within-retailer price differences as a violation of the retailer's reciprocal obligation (i.e., expectation of the retailer's caring about consumer welfare in a communal relationship or expectation of the retailers' reciprocating past or future favors in an exchange relationship). Second, we further hypothesize that betrayed consumers behave differently in the two types of relationship. That is, consumers who perceive a communal relationship should engage in constructive behaviors such as voice because such behaviors are consistent with the norms of improving mutual welfare. In contrast, customers who perceive an exchange relationship should resort to destructive behaviors such as exit and negative word-of-mouth because such behaviors serve the goal of restoring relationship equity.

We conducted two scenario-based studies. Study 1 was carried out to test the mediational role of betrayal. Participants in the within-retailer price difference scenario imagined a situation in which they purchased a PC at a fictitious retailer's store (\$1,000) and later found a lower price (\$900) at the same retailer's website. In the between-retailer scenario, consumers purchased a PC at a retailer's store (\$1,000) and later encountered the lower price (\$900) at a different retailer's website. Betrayal was measured based on three descriptors identified in a pilot study—"betrayed," "deceived," and "exploited."—anchored with "1. not at all" and "7. very much." ($\alpha_{\text{Betrayal}}=.93$). Behavioral intentions were also measured with seven-point single-item scales for voice (complaining, demanding apology), exit (reducing repurchase, switching retailer), and negative word-of-mouth. As expected, consumers in the within-retailer condition felt more betrayed than those in the between-retailer condition ($M_{\text{Within-Retailer}}=4.99$ vs. $M_{\text{Between-Retailer}}=2.71$, $F(1, 59)=27.10$, $p<.01$). In addition, consumers in the within-retailer condition were more likely to voice, exit, and spread negative word-of-mouth. Furthermore, mediation analyses suggest that feelings of betrayal mediated the effect of cross-channel price differences on behavioral intentions.

Study 2 was conducted to test the moderating effects of relationship expectation norms. Study 2's design was identical to Study 1, except that we used a real-world retailer (Wal-Mart) and an ink-jet printer in the cover story. Relationship expectation norms were measured with a 20-item scale ($\alpha_{\text{Communal}}=.72$, $\alpha_{\text{Exchange}}=.81$). We developed this scale by modifying existing relationship norm scales to reflect consumer's relationships with Wal-Mart (Clark, Oullette, Powerll, & Milberg, 1987; Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001). First, results replicated the findings from Study 1 such that participants in the within-retailer condition, versus those in the between-retailer condition, felt more betrayed and had more intentions to voice, exit, and spread negative word-of-mouth. Furthermore, moderated regression analyses revealed that, in both communal and exchange relationships, the higher the

relationship norm scores, the higher the level of betrayal in the within-retailer condition, supporting the predicted moderation by *degree* of relationship norms. In addition, consumers with higher perceived communal relationship norms, compared to those with higher perceived exchange relationship norms, were more likely to voice but less likely to exit in the within-retailer condition, supporting the predicted moderation by *type* of relationship norms. Negative word-of-mouth behavior did not differ.

Results across these studies indicate that consumers perceive the same retailer's cross-channel pricing as a violation of relationship norms, and betrayed consumers reacted differently depending on specific types of perceived relationship norms they apply to a given retailer.

“Service Providers’ Road to ‘Hell’: Service Betrayal, Its Consequences and Recovery Attempts”

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Eric Arnould, University of Nebraska

Fleura Bardhi, University of Nebraska

Understanding service failures has recently garnered wide attention in the marketing literature. Service failures are viewed as a major cause of customer dissatisfaction (Maxham & Netemeyer 2002; Smith, Bolton & Wagner 1999); customer switching (Keaveney 1995), customer complaints (Colgate & Norris 2001); negative word-of-mouth (Richins 1983); and exhaustion of customer loyalty (Bejou & Palmer 1998; Mattila 2001). Theory and research has been directed at identifying different typologies and magnitudes of service failures (Bejou & Plamer 1998; Bitner, Booms & Tetreault 1990; Keavney 1995; Kelley, Hoffman & Davis, 1993; Mack, Mueller, Crotts & Broderick 2002; Mattila 2001; Richins 1983; Smith, Bolton & Wagner 1999). These inquiries have opened the way to a more recent stream of research that examines interactions between service failure type and magnitude of service providers' recovery attempts (e.g. Smith et al. 1999).

This paper is part of a broader program of research focused on consumer feelings of and responses to betrayal in service encounters. In previous work, we identified and differentiated service failures that feel like betrayal (Price et al. 2002), and differentiated commercial from interpersonal betrayal (Price et al. 2001). Some extreme service failures are perceived as incidents of betrayal because they damage relationship components and influence consumers' self-esteem and identity. Commercial betrayal is similar to interpersonal betrayal in several respects, but also has unique characteristics. As with interpersonal betrayal, commercial betrayal violates relationship norms and as such can be represented as a specific case of a breach of interactional justice (Price et al. 2001). Consumers perceive service betrayal as an extreme service failure with dramatic consequences for consumer satisfaction, intentions and behavior.

In this paper, we report results of two experiments. Our first experiment explored the consequences of commercial betrayal as compared to service failure, asking whether relationships make a difference in feelings of betrayal and the consequences of betrayal. A convenience sample of students responded to scenarios in a 2 x 2 between subjects design that manipulated the relationship with the service organization and service failure versus service betrayal. The experimental scenarios were based on interview data and constructed to map to several actual incidents of service betrayal. There was a significant main effect for betrayal versus failure and a weaker main effect for relationships across the set of dependent measures. Although the outcome was the same for failure and betrayal, ratings on distributive justice, interactional justice, satisfaction and repurchase intention were significantly lower for betrayal. Negative emotions, revenge and negative word of mouth

were significantly higher for the betrayal scenario. A pre-existing relationship with the service organization tempers consumers' response to both failure and betrayal.

In experiment two, we ask whether service organizations can recover from betrayal. We replicated experiment one but added in a complete recovery strategy as recommended in the services literature (Smith et al. 1999). That is, we used a 2x2 between subjects, repeated measures design. This study shows that service recoveries that include apology, acknowledgement of the cause of the incident, and express responsibility mitigate the negative consequences of service betrayal. The full recovery strategy had a positive impact in both the failure and betrayal scenarios, but even after the recovery attempt significant differences in consumer responses remained between failure and betrayal. A full recovery strategy was not able to close the distance between a service failure and a service betrayal. Specifically, even following the recovery strategy, consumer satisfaction is lower in the betrayal incidents compared to the service failure incident. Moreover, in the case of service failure, consumers perceived the recovery strategy as fair, did not express negative feelings or intention to revenge, and expressed future purchase intentions. In incidents of betrayal, after attempts to recover consumers still experienced feelings of anger and discontent and expressed intention to engage in negative word of mouth, revenge, and no future purchase intentions. Overall, this result shows that incidents of betrayal can have uncorrectable negative consequences in customer-organization relationships leading to their dissolution. An especially difficult challenge is to recover from consumers' attributions of intentionality that are a common factor in feelings of betrayal. We end our paper with a discussion of how organizations can alleviate instances of betrayal and enhance likelihood of recovery.

“Avoiding Betrayal Over Choosing Safety? The Moderating Effects of Type of Betrayal, Type of Choice, and Choosing for Others on Betrayal Aversion”

Andrew D. Gershoff, Columbia University

Jonathan J. Koehler, University of Texas at Austin

A form of betrayal occurs when agents of protection cause the very harm that they are trusted to guard against. In choosing safety products consumers may experience betrayal when products intended to protect them, such as airbags trusted to save lives explode with such force that they cause death and when vaccines cause illnesses (Wald 1996).

Recently, Koehler & Gershoff (2003) demonstrated a betrayal aversion such that for identical negative outcomes, individuals request more punishment for, have more negative emotions toward, and more frequently seek to avoid potential betrayers compared to non-betrayers, even when doing so means accepting a greater overall risk of injury. For example, most subjects were willing to double their risk of death from automobile crashes, fires, and diseases to avoid a small possibility of death by airbags, vaccines, and faulty wiring in smoke detectors. Greater feelings of betrayal were found to be caused by a reaction to violations of positive expectations, or broken implicit or explicit promises, associated with the trust relationship. Negative emotions, such as anger and resentment, caused by the violation of expectations in a betrayal were found to be mediated by feelings of disorder and unpredictability in the social order.

The present research expands on this prior work by examining moderators of the effects of betrayal on consumer choice for protective, or safety products. Three completed studies examine the type of failure (passive or active), the type of choice (status quo present versus absent) and the decision maker frame (self versus other). Our results replicate and expand on our prior findings.

No safety product can always guarantee protection, but there are a number of ways in which they have the potential to fail. For example, an airbag that usually saves lives may fail by not deploying in an accident, allowing a passenger to die who might have otherwise been saved. Alternatively, an airbag may deploy with such force in an accident that it causes the death of a passenger. The unfortunate outcome of the failures is identical. However, while both violate expectations of trust (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer 1998), in the first case the failure is passive and in the second case the safety device is active in causing a death that otherwise would not have occurred.

Drawing on research on omission bias (Ritov & Baron 1999), which suggests that people will favor bad outcomes that arise from their own inactions compared to actions, we hypothesize that consumer choice for safety products with identical potential rates of failure will be affected by whether the failure is active or passive. Three hundred and forty one subjects participated in study one which served to examine the hypothesis as well as to replicate prior results of Koehler & Gershoff (2003). In all conditions subjects made choices between two automobiles with airbags. One was described as having a 2% risk of death in the event of serious car accident. The other was described as having a 1% risk of death in the event of a serious car accident plus an additional one in ten thousand (.01%) risk of death in the event of a serious accident that varied in its description by condition. In the active betrayal condition the .01% risk was described as coming from the force of the exploding airbag. In the passive betrayal condition the .01% risk was described as coming from the airbag failing to deploy. In the non-betrayal condition the .01% risk was described as coming from engine fumes due to a cracked engine block. Note that despite having identical risks, in the non-betrayal condition the additional risk is not directly caused by the agent of protection. Results replicate prior research and support the hypothesis. In the non-betrayal condition most subjects (60%) selected and rated as more preferable the airbag with the lower overall risk (1.01%) of death. In the active betrayal condition only 34% of subjects selected the airbag with the lower risk. Further, when the betrayal was passive as opposed to active, aversion to the betraying product was reduced, and significantly more subjects (50%) chose the lower risk alternative.

Study two examined whether the decision involved a status quo position or not. In study one subjects actively made choices between two possible safety product alternatives. Thus in this case, rejecting the lower risk, yet potentially betraying, alternative still involved some level of protection. However in many consumer circumstances the decision is whether or not to employ the safety product, not which one to employ. Fifty-nine subjects participated in study two. Identical materials to the active betrayal condition in study one were used, however in study two the choice was described between no airbag with a 2% chance of death and an airbag with a 1% chance of death plus a .01% chance of death from the force of the exploding airbag. While only 34% of subjects chose the lower (1.01%) risk airbag when the alternative was a higher (2%) risk airbag, 69% of subjects chose the lower (1.01%) risk airbag when the alternative was a higher (2%) risk associated with no airbag at all.

Effects of interpersonal betrayal involve visceral and intense emotional reactions (Strauss 1994). Visceral reactions have been described as being weighed extremely heavily in decisions by the individual experiencing the reaction, but that they tend to be underweighted or even ignored when making decisions for others (Loewenstein 1996). Study three examined the impact of having others make a safety decision in the face of a potential safety product betrayal. Sixty subjects participated in study three. Mate-

rials were identical to the active betrayal condition in study one (potential risk from exploding airbag) except that subjects were told that they were making the decision for another person who they did not know and would never meet. Supporting the hypothesis, the betrayal effect was moderated by whether the decision was self or other focused. While only 34% of subjects chose the lower risk airbag for themselves. 63% of subjects chose it for some one else.

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The Collective-Relational Paradox in Consumer Trust Judgments: Framework and Propositions

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Rarely in its long history has the marketing discipline faced a paradox of such magnitude and clarity as it faces today in local and global markets. On a firm-consumer level, the focus on building relationships, deepening loyalty, and fostering consumer trust in the firm's commitment to serving customers has never been more intense or clear. Consider, for instance, the *Marketing Science Institute's* recognition of the five topics of top tier priority for 2002-2004. Each of these topics appears to relate one way or another to better understanding, and strengthening the relationship between the firm and its customers. Yet, at a collective level the general distrust of business motivations, open cynicism and widespread belief that business in general and marketing in particular will opportunistically exploit society's trust if given a chance has never been more palpable or real. Stories of this "crisis of confidence" abound in the popular press (Business Week, June 2002; Chain Store Age, May 2002). Additionally, polling data demonstrates the declining public trust in Corporate America (Golin/Harris Poll 2002; Booth-Harris Trust Monitor, 2001), general loss of public faith in institutions such as medicine (Schlesinger 2002), government (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000), and business (Nye 1997). That collective distrust can coexist in an era when firms are redoubling their efforts to build relational trust is a paradox that has thus far remained below the radar screen of researchers and practitioners alike. As such, the collective-relational paradox of trust is little understood; even less recognized are its implications for consumers and firms in general, and individual firm-consumer relationships in particular.

The purpose of our study is to provide an initial exposition of the collective-relational trust paradox. We provide a conceptual foundation for the collective and relational trust concepts. We draw from sociology, psychology and management disciplines for a directed and meaningful analysis of the collective-relational paradox. We then propose a theoretical framework that attempts to capture the impact of collective trust/distrust on relational trust and their joint impact on customer loyalty in individual firm-consumer exchanges. Our study concludes by proposing future research directions within the collective-relational paradox and the pragmatic significance of the paradox in amplifying or attenuating a firm's efforts to build customer loyalty.

Our conceptual foundation for collective trust examines three elements: The definition of a collective, the substantive content of the collective trust construct, and the mechanisms underlying the antecedents and consequences of the collective trust construct. Following Zucker's (1986) historical analysis of the production of trust in society, the notion of collective refers to broad societal and economic institutions/groups that are perceived to be similar based on certain individual (e.g., society of accounting professionals) or firm-specific attributes (e.g., chemical industries association).

We specify the substantive content of the collective trust construct as consumer's willingness to invest resources, authority, and/or responsibility in a diffused or institutionalized collective entity to act on consumers' behalf to safeguard consumer interests in exchanges involving individual members of the collective (Shapiro, 1987). That is, a consumer with a high trust in a collective agency (e.g., airlines in general {diffused} or the FAA {institutionalized}) is more willing to entrust this agency with authority and

responsibility to regulate market exchanges involving its members to ensure that consumer interests are protected and disputes are adjudicated fairly.

There are three separate schools of thought that pertain to the mechanisms of collective trust. The first deals with the social-psychological theories of *generalized trust*—social exchanges based on general predisposition to trust others (Luhmann 1979). The second attributes the mechanisms of collective trust to the cultural environment of the individuals and the last proposes that collective trust is predicated on institutional performance alone (Newton and Norris 2000). We discuss each one of these perspectives and draw distinctions between the notion of a collective from a socio-psychological-political perspective and business perspective.

Unlike collective trust, relational trust has received significant attention in the marketing and management areas with emphasis on different aspects of this phenomenon. Organizational psychologists emphasize relational trust within firms, typically between employees and supervisors, and between firms, typically firms engaged in vertical or horizontal alliances (Gambetta 1988, McAllister 1995; Jones and George 1998; Brockner, Siegel, Daly, Tyler, and Martin 1997; Kramer 1999).

Marketing scholars emphasize relational trust at the interface of firms and consumers, typically between consumer and service provider/brand (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol 2002; Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000; Iacobucci and Ostrom 1996; Fournier 1998), and of manufacturer and channel intermediaries typically involving vertical channel members or salespeople and a firm (Doney and Cannon 1997; Kumar 1996; Morgan and Hunt 1994; Gulati 1995; Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande 1992; Wicks, Herman, and Jones 1999; Lane and Bachmann 1996). In the tradition of academic research, these studies are founded on a theoretically based conceptualization of the relational trust construct, and important concerns regarding the substantive usefulness and validity of this construct have been addressed. Collectively, these studies represent a rich tradition of academic relational trust literature that can be employed to tackle the issues of collective trust, and the potential for a collective-relational trust paradox.

To promote research into this area, we follow the conceptualization of the collective trust construct with a framework of the asymmetric and monotonic effects of collective trust on relational trust and consumer loyalty. Several research propositions are drawn from the model. Future research directions and public policy implications conclude the study.

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Cynics and Skeptics: Consumer Dispositional Trust

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated cynicism in a consumer context, using qualitative interviews in a grounded theory approach. Analysis revealed an underlying construct of consumer dispositional trust. Consumers generalize trust violations across various categories and see a generalized trust as part of their personality. Explorations of cynicism in the consumer context reflected a belief that companies lack integrity and a negative affect toward companies, with an emphasis on dishonesty or empty promises. Consumer cynicism is associated with disparaging and withdrawal behavior, precautions and retribution-seeking. Perhaps surprisingly, cynical consumers demonstrated very strong brand loyalty to the few companies they could trust.

Social commentators claim cynicism in America is reaching crisis proportions, and public opinion polls reflect decreasing faith in politics, media and education systems. Academic and popular literature about societal or political cynicism often point to Western consumer culture, especially advertising, as a major driver of this shift toward an increasing perception of a cultural hollowness (Goldman 1996; Stivers 1994). This pilot study investigated cynicism directed toward consumption itself, using qualitative interviews in a grounded theory approach. Analysis revealed an underlying construct of consumer dispositional trust, a relatively stable tendency to trust or distrust across multiple consumption situations. At the extreme distrust end of the continuum, consumer beliefs, affect and behaviors can be called consumer cynicism.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Trust

At a macroconceptual level, conceptualizations of trust are fairly consistent in the vast trust literature, predominantly featuring two dimensions, competence (perceived ability to meet customer needs) and benevolence (perceived willingness to put the customer ahead of the self) (Doney 1997; Ganesan and Hess 1997; Singh and Sirdeshmukh 2000). Indeed these two dimensions of trust parallel communication work in source credibility and have remained relatively consistent since the days of Aristotle (McCroskey and Teven 1999; Wanzenried and Powell 1993). Most of the marketing literature on trust focuses on channels and business-to-business relationships. In addition, Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002) recently provided an in-depth analysis of the consumer trust concept, focusing on the trust concept itself rather than its consequences. They distinguish between trustworthiness (consumers' perceptions of company and frontline employee behavior) and trust (consumers' self-reported belief that the company and employees are dependable, competent, of high integrity and responsive to consumers).

In academic literature and common language use, trust is consistently represented as a relationship-specific construct. In contrast, this paper introduces the construct of consumer dispositional trust, an individual difference variable which impacts the way consumers interpret consumption interactions and their expectations for trustworthy behavior across multiple companies and situations. In terms of models of specific relationship trust, dispositional trust might be seen as an individual difference variable influencing trust, along with such factors as norms and perceptions of dependence and power.

Cynicism

Although cynicism has been a philosophical and literary construct for centuries, it has emerged as a social scientific construct only in about the last 50 years. In addition to general cynicism, social scientists have identified specific cynicisms targeted at specific institutions: work (occupational) cynicism, organizational or employee cynicism and organizational change cynicism (Abraham 2000; Dean et al. 1998). This paper proposes consumer cynicism as another specific cynicism worthy of investigation.

General or specific, cynicism is described as a learned attitude formed through the process Kanter and Mirvis describe: unrealistic expectations lead to disappointment, which leads to disillusion, a "sense of being let down or of letting oneself down, and more darkly, the sense of being deceived, betrayed or used by others" (1989, p.3). The first steps of this process correspond to widely accepted expectancy disconfirmation theory. Satisfaction is determined more by performance in relation to expectations than by performance in any objective sense. Scholars have portrayed negative disconfirmation of expectations as the primary mechanism for customer dissatisfaction (e.g. Oliver and Bearden 1985). Yet cynics are not merely dissatisfied—they are bitter, angry and resentful. They adopt the cynical attitude to ensure they will not be "taken for suckers" again (Kanter and Mirvis 1989, p.3). In academic terms, the cynicism attitude is characterized by "negative affect" (Dean et al. 1998).

The notion of empty promises or false appearances is a critical element common to all conceptualizations of cynicism. Although the deliberate creation of unrealistic expectations is not always included in formal definitions of cynicism, references to a fundamental disconnect between a publicly presented image and reality characterize all discussions of cynicism. The fundamental disconnect between the presented image and reality is necessary but not sufficient for cynicism. Cynicism also incorporates a feeling of manipulation or ethical violation, exploiting others for one's own interest (Chaloupka 1999). The pretense of unselfishness to mask selfish goals lies at the heart of the cynicism concept. It also lies at the heart of criticisms about advertising and other marketing messages.

Cynicism in the consumption context: Relevant consumer behavior research

Cynicism has not been studied in the consumption context *per se*, but research in other areas of consumer behavior suggests consumers may in fact be feeling cynical. The consumer alienation construct incorporates attitudes of distrust toward businesses and a feeling of being manipulated (Allison 1978; Durand and Lambert 1985), but also incorporates elements unrelated to cynicism, such as confidence in purchasing skills. Scholars have also found evidence of considerable consumer skepticism toward advertising claims (i.e. Koslow 2000), which relates to the disbelief component of cynicism but does not encompass the perception of deliberate manipulation or the negative affect of cynicism. A growing body of research on anti-consumption attitudes, exemplified by the 2002 Psychology and Marketing special issue on the topic and the Culture Jamming film presented at ACR 2002, suggests at least some consumers are feeling enough discontent to rebel through behaviors ranging from voluntary simplicity to defacing advertisements.

Thus, existing literature supports the notion that a cynicism-like construct has the potential to explain consumer attitudes and behavior, but the precise nature of this construct is not clear. The approach to this study was exploratory, with research questions in mind such as: Do consumers have attitudes resembling cynicism about the consumption process? What should a cynicism construct look like in the consumption context? How does it develop? What aspects or level of the consumption process is targeted—individual companies? Consumption culture?

METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework outlined here is based on eight semi-structured interviews conducted February 28–March 7, 2003. These eight interviews are a pilot study for a larger interview project now in progress. Interview methodology is appropriate for the subject because cynicism is a conscious, even deliberate attitude. Cynicism is depicted in art and discussed in the public forum and everyday conversation. Although they may use other terms, people reflect on and attempt to manage their own cynicism. Thus, people are well qualified to report on their own cynicism, and their understanding and naïve theories are an essential part of the construct.

Sample and Procedure

The purpose of the study was initial conceptual groundwork on consumer cynicism construct, not to ascertain what proportion of the population is cynical about consumption, a question left for later research. Consumption-related cynicism could impact any consumer. For this pilot study, a convenience sample of members of the Hickman High School Music Boosters association (parents of high school students) was recruited. As a token of appreciation, the association was paid \$15 for each interview. For the full study, interviews will draw from a variety of community organizations selected to represent a broad spectrum of the population.

Volunteers from the boosters association scheduled individual appointments. After each subject had reviewed and signed a written consent form, interviews were conducted based loosely on an interview guide (McCracken 1988). Interviews typically lasted about an hour. The interviews were recorded on audio cassettes and professionally transcribed.

Questionnaire

Leading respondents was of particular concern because of possible social desirability and social contagion effects. Once cynical ideas are presented, participants may jump on the bandwagon in order not to appear naïve. Scholars refer to a culture of cynicism (Chaloupka 1999; Goldfarb 1991; Stivers 1994). To avoid leading respondents, interview questions began with positively valenced prompts such as asking about trust in a brand or company and used a balance of positive and negative prompts throughout. “Cynicism” or “cynical” are highly charged words laden with inconsistent but strong negative connotations of pessimism as well as the more positive connotations of sophistication. Therefore, the words “cynicism” and “skepticism” were not introduced by the interviewer until near the close of the session, unless subjects themselves spontaneously introduced those terms. Instead, the emphasis of the interview prompts was on terms associated with potential cynicism elements such as trust-mistrust, ethics, or overpromising.

Analysis

The transcripts were analyzed following the grounded theory procedures for open and axial coding outlined by Strauss and

Corbin (1998). Although the process was fluid, with multiple types of coding going on simultaneously, coding was loosely organized into phases focusing on increasingly high levels of analysis, similar to the process recommended by McCracken (1988). Initially, transcripts were read carefully line by line and labeled or categorized using open codes. Next, the transcript was read again, with a greater emphasis on code description and consistency. Third, the codes and associated quotations from the text were reviewed (moving up a level of abstraction from the whole text to just the coded quotations), and notes and comments were made on emergent conceptual issues. The concept of the dispositional trust continuum began to emerge about half-way through the coding process; after that point a profile memo was written for each interview subject addressing his or her trust/cynicism outlook. Finally, the analysis moved up yet another level of abstraction to focus primarily on clustering the codes, describing their properties and dimensions and defining relationships among them using axial coding. Throughout the process, the cynicism literature was used as a point of constant comparison (Strauss and Corbin 1998), drawing on not only the definitions specified in social scientific journals, but also the varying perspectives on cynicism in social commentary.

Although a formal audit was not completed, a researcher not involved in the project did conduct an independent open and axial coding analysis on a subset of three interviews. His conclusions were fairly similar, noting similar elements of the trust and cynicism definitions, a trust-cynicism continuum, and a dichotomy between a relationship-specific trust and a more general trust tendency.

EMERGENT CONSTRUCT: CONSUMER DISPOSITIONAL TRUST

The construct of consumer dispositional trust emerged from the data. As noted in the literature review, trust is typically described as partners’ attitudes and expectations in a specific relationship. Insight from the interviews suggests the existence of an additional type of trust, one that is generalized across multiple contexts. This paper proposes consumer dispositional trust as a relatively stable tendency to expect (un)trustworthy behavior across a variety of contexts.

In traditional models of relationship specific trust, dispositional trust would join the ranks of the many factors contributing to the development of trust in a specific relationship. Its influence would likely be particularly strong at the beginning of a relationship in the face of a lack of more specific information. Yet the influence of dispositional trust is not limited to trust in specific relationships. In the consumption context, dispositional trust appears to also influence consumer search and decision-making behavior and consumers’ interpretation of or response to myriad consumption interactions. Furthermore, distrustful consumers try to spread their distrust by socializing others.

Trust in the Consumer Context

As previously mentioned, the trust literature typically identifies two dimensions: competence and benevolence. Although consumers in this study mentioned product quality and skill of the company when talking about trust in particular companies or brands, the benevolence dimension seems to be much more salient when talking about generalized trust. When asked to define what the idea of trust in a company meant to them, interview participants emphasized fair treatment and living up to promises:

“In the sense of the company I think that they would treat me fairly, they would have a good product, a good service behind

that product... if I would have a problem that they would take care of it, they would try to resolve it, they would value me as a customer, and try to do their best to keep my business.” (I3)

“Trust that the product is going to do what it says it’s going to do” (I2)

“If they back up their product, I have full confidence that if there is ever a problem with this product that I will get full customer courtesy, I think that’s a part of it.” (I6)

“The break down for me probably occurs probably in some [support] service ... I have to sometimes really get right with people and make them do what they say they were going to do.” (I7)

Interview participants seemed fairly tolerant of problems with the actual products, but saw mishandling of their concerns as central to their concept of trusting in a company.

[Because so many of the components are not under the manufacturer’s control] “you’re going to have people and places and things and equipment that do not perform. Now, it’s how you handle its effect on your consumer, that is to me what speaks to ethics of doing business.” (I7)

Self-Characterization

Interview participants clearly perceived themselves to have some kind of generalized trusting/distrustful perspective and see this as a personality trait. Interview questions were phrased in terms of asking consumers to think of specific examples and then asking them to assess whether such an incident was typical of their experience. Other prompts asked their opinions of “most companies.” Instead of responding in terms of perceived frequency of company behavior, participants often responded with statements of self-characterization such as:

“I think I put trust into a company until it’s proven otherwise.”
I8

“I won’t use companies or I won’t work with people who I distrust and for me I’ve developed sort of a sense that I can’t know when you are putting me on, or when you are real flaky, and I don’t like to do business with people like that. ‘I’m just a sales call away from being your best friend,’ –No, I don’t like people like that.”

“Now I’m certainly not a naïve consumer, but I thought that was pretty interesting yesterday.” I1

Generalization

Generalization is critical in the formation of dispositional distrust. Interview participants saw negative incidents as learning experiences which changed their behavior in the future. One company’s failure was generalized to shape expectations for other companies’ behavior. Even trusting consumers generalized from an incident to a product category, and consumers in this study typically described negative incidents using category terms rather than specific brands.

For example, Interview 3 described an incident shopping with her sister for a computer in which the salesperson recommended a voice recognition package. Later they discovered “in the fine print” that the package did not include all the required hardware; the low price was not such a good deal after all.

I: So next time, later, if you are in the market to get voice recognition software...

R: I’m definitely not going to look for theirs. I mean—I would actually—I don’t remember the name myself because I’m not in the market for it but if I were I’d call up my sister and find out what it was. Because I definitely do remember the experience even though I didn’t associate the name with it.

I: What about other software?

R: I think it makes you more skeptical about any of it, I mean you want to read the boxes closer and be sure you are getting exactly what you think you are buying.

I: What about things other than software? Do you think it would carry over?

R: Probably not so much of one experience but I think the more experiences like that that you have with products as you buy—if I also bought panty hose and there was something funny about them and also about something else and you know, I mean, eventually, if you have enough of those experiences then I think it kind of makes you skeptical about everything, but as long as it more of an isolated thing I think it just kind of makes me more skeptical about software in general.

The literature also shows support for the idea of generalization. Research on the sleeper effect (Allen and Stiff 1989; Gruder and et al. 1978; Pratkanis, Greenwald, Leippe, and Baumgardner 1988), in which people remember information but disassociate it from the source, provides tangential support for the notion that distinctions among sources may erode over time. Is it likely that consumers would forget exactly which brand was responsible for violating their trust? Some studies do suggest that consumers are capable of becoming confused about brand names (Allen and Stiff 1989; Foxman, Berger, and Cote 1992; Kapferer 1995) and about which attributes belong to which brand (Kent and Allen 1994). In the example above, she has already forgotten the specific brand name, even though the incident was recent and her feelings were strong. Research on associative learning also supports the possibility that generalization can occur. Leippe, Greenwald and Baumgardner (1982) found that, when exposed to a series of advertisements including negative and neutral effects about different brands, consumers generalized the negative characteristics to the neutral brands when the brands were similar. This generalization has significant managerial implications—a competitor’s violation of trust can impact the whole product category.

Although interview participants had little difficulty in thinking of product categories that were particularly trustworthy (grocery stores, brand name foods, pharmaceuticals) or untrustworthy (hair regrowth products, used car dealers, pharmaceuticals), they also categorized in other unanticipated ways. One common categorization was of particular marketing practices. Not surprisingly, participants expressed skepticism of mail-order companies, ordering off a television commercial, and telemarketers. Several participants referred to “bait-and-switch” advertising (sometimes even using the term), in which promoted limited time sales did not live up to promises. Rebates and additional fees for maintenance contracts were also mentioned:

“I feel like they are trying to sell me this washer or dryer or they’re trying to sell me this TV set and then they say, oh but then for \$200.00 we’ll give you this extended warranty and so

forth and you're like, wait a second, back up your product, why do I have to pay for you to back up your product?" 16

"They are all doing the same thing, they are all issuing rebates. But you have to come home, fill out the paper work, mail the damn stuff off, and what if it gets there and 4 weeks later somebody opens it and says 'Oh, you didn't put the UPC code in it'? Does it die there? Will they give you a notice? Will you ever see your money? Well, I don't know, do you have a personal secretary that will keep track of all the rebates you've got coming in?... They hope that you will not send in the rebate so they'll get full price for it. They figure you are too stupid or too forgetful... I can't really say it is misleading but I think that they are banking on you either being too late or too stupid to do something that you shouldn't have to do. They should just give you the price." (17)

Another common categorization among interview participants was to trust small, local companies or stores over large, national "conglomerates." Participants almost all raised this issue themselves before reaching the planned prompts on the questionnaire. As one fairly cynical consumer put it, "The larger the company the more I distrust it" (11). Interview participants suggested several reasons for their trust in smaller companies: being more accountable because of being in the community, being more dependent on a small customer base (need for repeat business), and being less insulated in layers of hierarchy. Several participants felt strongly about this and made a deliberate effort to patronize local businesses even at higher prices.

COMPLEX CONTINUUM: TRUSTING, SKEPTICAL AND CYNICAL CONSUMERS

The consumer dispositional trust construct presented in this paper can be seen as a continuum, but it is a complex one. This pilot study suggests consumers with a predominantly distrustful outlook differ from consumers with a predominantly trusting outlook in more ways than simply degree of trust. Degree of generalization, salience, and affect are also relevant dimensions. During analysis, profiles were written for each interview participant summarizing the dispositional trust demonstrated, and these profiles were organized into clusters along the continuum, loosely categorized as trusting, skeptical and cynical. These were not intended to represent hard categories or formal classifications and the boundaries of each category are fluid.

Trusting Consumers

In this study, for consumers clustered at the most trusting end of the continuum, trust seemed to be less salient in the consumption context. Examples of companies or brands they particularly trusted or distrusted did not come to mind readily, and satisfaction issues, rather than trust issues, were mentioned more frequently when asked to explain brand and store preferences.

"I think for them [preferred stores] I look at it more as I like the selection they have, the prices they have and so, I don't know if I would say it was a trust sort of thing, I guess there's a certain amount of trust that kind of you know, you trust that they are going to kind of cater to your needs, but, not in the sense that we normally think of trust." (13)

"I don't know that I line up companies and say these are trustworthy and these aren't. As a whole, I just know that I've had good experiences with Toyota and most recently got a

Ford Explorer and that's been a real good vehicle for me." (15)

Interview participants in the "trusting" category made fewer self-characterization statements related to trust issues—they did not describe themselves as "skeptical" or "savvy" or "cautious" consumers as more skeptical consumers did.

Skeptical Consumers

Skeptical consumers represent the moderate cluster on the consumer dispositional trust continuum presented in this paper. Skepticism is defined as "an attitude of doubt or a disposition of incredulity either in general or toward a particular object" (Webster's 1990).

The advertising skepticism construct in the literature is closely related: "Skepticism implies that consumers recognize that advertisers have specific motives, such as persuading consumers, and therefore that advertisers' communications may be biased and varied in their truthfulness" (Mangleburg and Bristol 1998, p. 11). Although it is described as negatively valenced (Boush, Friestad, and Rose 1994), advertising skepticism is characterized as a needed consumer skill developed through socialization. In the context of this paper, consumer skepticism is not limited to advertising claims. All of the interview participants indicated some degree of skepticism toward advertising, sometimes to the point of discounting its claims completely. Even trusting consumers were skeptical of some advertising: "It may say that it can clean something and it would be really easy; you'd just squirt, let it rest, then take it off and it won't do that." (12)

Skeptical consumers in this study believe they need to be cautious and on guard against scams, but they don't indicate much negative affect or resentment. Associated behaviors seem to be limited to precautions—reading the fine print, checking the warranty, shopping around and researching major purchases. Their perception seems to be that there are a few truly untrustworthy or unethical companies, but that many companies can be trustworthy.

"I'm not like overly distrustful of companies I don't think, but not just you know automatic either... something had to happen to cause me to build a little more trust in one company than the other." (16)

Later, this participant characterized herself as "skeptical," which she defined as: "A little more cautious about thinking and checking things out before you just blindly trust." (16) Skeptical consumers saw themselves as becoming more skeptical overtime, but did not point to specific moments of disillusionment. Instead they referred to a gradual development and also mentioned media stories such as the tobacco companies, pharmaceuticals, and Firestone Tires.

Some skeptical consumers in this study see the trust as residing not in the companies themselves, but in external factors that would keep companies in line: competition/the marketplace, the legal system (fear of getting sued), licensing and certification, and government restrictions (FDA). For skeptical consumers, trust issues are salient. Compared to trusting consumers, they seem to be better able to recall specific incidents when trust was built or violated and are more likely to see preferred brands as something they trust.

Cynical Consumers

Two interview participants were clustered at the cynical end of the consumer dispositional trust continuum, and some consumers in

the skeptical group also made cynical statements about certain product categories. Cynical study participants are also skeptical, but, consistent with representations of the cynicism construct in social science literature, cynicism in the consumer context seems to be characterized by a belief in a pervasive lack of integrity among consumer companies and negative affect such as bitterness or resentment, as suggested by Interview 7's comment about the rebate process, "It's like I'm this little puppet and they are just manipulating me."

Cynics in this study perceive a pervasive dishonesty or sham and see companies as frequently manipulating consumers.

"[department store] has this big sale right now. All of a sudden everything in the store is just 'oh this is perfect for you', 'oh I'll be sure that I can find it for you,' 'I'll hold it for you.' It is just a motivation to move the merchandise out of the store ... Like yesterday, I tried on something that is really too small on me and it was really awful. And the clerk said, 'Oh this looks really great on you!' ... I felt very strongly that they have their meetings an hour before the store opens, and they have their motivational talks, and they have sales incentives. And that is the way the world works. Now I'm certainly not a naïve consumer, but I thought that was pretty interesting yesterday." (11)

All interview participants indicated that the underlying motive for most, if not all, companies was the bottom line profit. But cynics in this study expressed concern or irritation that businesses' over-eager pursuit of profit would trample other important considerations such as consumer safety, and that emphasis on short-term profits undermines company motivation to really build quality and customer satisfaction.

"I'm saying that profit means that I retain you over time as a customer that means I treat you good, I give you good service, I give you good products, I don't over-promise anything—and if I do make a mistake, I do apologize for it and I try to correct that. That's long term, that is profit. To me. And what I'm telling you is what I see today in the market place is that companies have a very short term approach to profit from the standpoint that they will not retain you because they will over-promise you and they will not deliver on service and they will treat you like you are not important. ... I know I keep going back to the same thing, which is a long term look but you don't get a customer today and then you blow them off tomorrow." (17)

For cynical consumers in this study, their dispositional trust was very salient. Descriptions of themselves as consumers emphasized beliefs that companies are untrustworthy and their own tendency to take extra precautions. In other contexts, two categories of behavior are typically associated with cynicism, disparaging and withdrawal behaviors. These categories can also be seen in the consumer context. Cynical participants described efforts to socialize others by bringing children up to be critical consumers, getting friends on board for boycotts, and spreading negative word-of-mouth. They also described, of course, avoiding buying from distrusted companies, but also mentioned trying to reduce consumption in general, avoiding impulse buys, avoiding negotiation and avoiding shopping. Two other types of behaviors were mentioned: precautions and retribution.

Like skeptical participants, they saw the risk of being "ripped off" as something they could minimize through caution, but to a greater degree. The following story from Interview 7 shows his inclination to take precautions. The quote also shows the salience

of the dispositional or generalized aspect of trust—he interrupts his own specific story to generalize to a perceived tendency of lower-level personnel to go back on verbal promises, a recurring theme for him:

"Somebody stole my credit card numbers so I had to cancel ... and in the course of handling it—or any kind of daily chores—you're going to have a conversation with somebody over the phone, some sort of personnel, and they'll tell you 'Sir, you're absolutely right somebody made those charges and we're going to take those off your card, blah, blah, blah.' Well who was it? When did they say it? What was ... you know what I'm saying? So if you don't record—and I have recorded conversations. I literally have recorded conversations."

The cynical participants also described efforts to gain retribution when unfairly treated, whereas, at least in this pilot study, more trusting consumers seemed to be more inclined not to bother. This contrasts with some implications of cynicism literature in other contexts, in which cynics withdraw, see themselves as powerless, and avoid futile efforts to change (Govier 1997). None of the participants were interested in doing business with companies they didn't trust, but for non-cynics, the motivation seemed to be primarily preventing their own dissatisfaction. For cynics, their avoidance of distrusted companies seemed to be motivated by an additional concern: punishing the company.

"It was totally unsatisfactory. I went to the Attorney General, I complained to somebody in Illinois where their office was, and I'll do whatever it takes to make sure that I get restitution but I'm fairly savvy but the average guy is going to give up." (17)

"I'm thinking about not shopping there any more even though I have a historical loyalty ... not that they would miss me but I think that you can only accomplish things if you start with one person at a time." (11)

Trust, Brand Loyalty and the Cynical Consumer

Initial expectations for the project were that a possible negative effect of cynicism might be a decreased capacity for brand loyalty. But as the dispositional trust construct emerged, it became clear that it influenced trust in specific relationships but it was not part of trust in specific relationships. Dispositional trust is not a capacity for trust; it is an inclination or predisposition to trust. If the predisposition not to trust (as in the case of cynicism) can be overcome, trust is still possible.

The cynical interview participants described themselves as brand loyal and talked more enthusiastically about the companies, brands, shops and salespeople they especially trusted more than any of the other interview participants. Against the background of so many distrusted companies, these exceptions stood out in sharp relief. For the cynical participants, trust built on previous experience was a primary reason for brand or store preference. They were more aware of specific brand names and seemed to see themselves as having a relationship or "doing business with" their preferred companies. The cynical consumers frequently mentioned being willing to pay more and go out of their way to buy from businesses they trusted and to rely on a trusted store or brand as a shortcut to purchase decision research. Interview 7 now limits his car shopping to one dealer—the only used car dealer he feels he can trust.

As with the punishing behavior, the motivation for the brand loyal behavior seemed to go beyond a desire to ensure their own satisfaction to a sense of rewarding the few trustworthy companies.

Cynical interview participants perceive a competitive business environment which discourages integrity in companies. They also saw consumers' own behavior as a major component of that business environment through consumer overemphasis on price (over quality), abuse of exchange and return policies, and failure to research. Perhaps the cynical consumers feel a need to try to counterbalance these other consumers, or perhaps they just feel a need to try to "help" their companies succeed in a competitive world; clearly they feel some responsibility to demonstrate their support of trustworthy companies.

Development of Cynicism

The cynicism literature describes a process of disillusionment leading to the development of the learned attitude of cynicism (e.g. Kanter and Mirvis 1989), but studies do not report individuals' accounts of their experience of this process. Cynical interview participants did point to specific personal incidents that caused them to increase their feelings of skepticism and could describe a generalization process.

"My dad died of cancer in 76; and I started reading all of the material about pollution of our food supply and I realized that chances were that our food supply was not as pure as it used to be because of the intensive farming, chemicals, pesticides, everything that was increasingly being used to produce more, better yields, and so up to that point I never gave any kind of thought to trusting the food but when that happened awareness finally that probably your foods are not as good as you thought. That was certainly a breakthrough, it was a different era for me." (11)

"I looked at a used vehicle and before I got home they were calling me and telling me they were taking that vehicle to the auction. 'We've got to sell it, we've got to make up the amount,' high pressure, high pressure, high pressure... [a few weeks later] I was talking to this friend of mine at [another dealer] and I told him the high pressure tactics used and he said, 'They didn't take it to the auction, that's just a technique.' I said, 'You think they actually lied to me face to face,' and he said, 'Yeah, I bet it is.' I went back over to the lot and it was still sitting on the lot. I caught them in that lie and that—it is buyer beware. I'm fully aware of that." (17)

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Using a grounded theory approach, this pilot study uncovers the concept of dispositional trust, and the meaning and structure of cynicism in the consumer context is explored.

Interview participants' comments clearly demonstrated that they perceived a trusting or distrustful outlook as a personality characteristic. Consumers in this study generalized violations of trust from one company across varying levels such as product category or promotion technique (i.e. rebates). This has significant implications for managers because the actions of a competitor clearly influence consumers' disposition to trust in the same product category—even for the most trusting consumers. Interview participants' observations in this study suggest that trust violations anywhere in the product category have implications for anyone in the product category, suggesting perceptions of industry standards as a possible area of future research.

Explorations of the meaning and structure of cynicism in the consumer context reflect the same elements characteristic of other types of cynicism: a belief that the target lacks integrity and a

negative affect, with an emphasis on dishonesty or empty promises. Behaviors typically associated with cynicism in other contexts fall into two major categories: disparaging behaviors and withdrawal behaviors. In the consumer context, the study suggests two other categories of behaviors are relevant: precautions and retribution. The cynical consumers' discussion of specific moments which shaped their cynical outlook offers a potential contribution to the cynicism literature as well as to consumer research and should be explored in future research. Perhaps the most interesting finding of this study is the committed, enthusiastic brand loyalty shown by cynical consumers.

Based on this pilot study, a full-scale interview study is in progress to further develop the theoretical constructs. Some of the research questions being pursued so far investigate the link between consumer dispositional trust and anti-consumption attitudes and consumer self-confidence and consumer notions of societal and economic forces behind their generalizations about companies. After further qualitative work to shape this construct, future research may include development of a quantitative measure.

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Is it Still Worth to be Credible? A Meta-Analysis of Temporal Patterns of Source Credibility Effects in Marketing

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is the examination of the development of the impact of source credibility in marketing communication over the years. A meta-analysis was applied to 167 relevant effect sizes. The results indicate that the effect of source credibility increased over the years. The rise was stronger especially for sources communicating personally with the consumers than for other sources, and for communication about services compared to communication about goods. Also, the rise of the effect sizes was stronger for cognitive and attitudinal effects than for other effects.

1 INTRODUCTION

Credibility is a concept rich in tradition. Scholarly examination of source credibility and its impact is as old as the discussion of rhetoric itself, having originated with the ancient Greeks. First empirical studies referring to the impact of source credibility can be backdated to research projects dealing with the concept of prestige in the 1930s (Arnett et al. 1931; Wegrocki 1934). Indeed, Hovland and his colleagues who worked on the *Attitude Change and Communication Research Project* at Yale University in the 1940s and 1950s are claimed to be the founders of modern source credibility research (Hovland et al. 1953; Hovland et al. 1949; Hovland and Weiss 1951). Their research interest in persuasion and in particular in the effects of source credibility rose from the worry about the efficiency of Nazi propaganda during World War II and the desire to find out means to improve the propaganda of the Allies. Since this time, a lot of research has been undertaken to examine the impact of source credibility. Also marketing researchers have detected the concept of source credibility as a powerful facility for influencing consumers. If a consumer perceives a source as having higher credibility than other sources, the consumer is more receptive to messages from the source and is more likely to be persuaded. However, whereas the idea and the concept of source credibility haven't changed in the course of time, consumers and consumption behavior have changed during the last decades. This has probably also led to a change of the impact of source credibility. The main research question of the study deals with the development of source credibility effects in marketing in the course of time. It will be answered by applying a meta-analysis of the effects of source credibility in marketing communication. Beforehand, a brief explanation of the concept of credibility and its effects in marketing communication as well as a rationale for the changes in consumer behavior over the years are required.

2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Credibility refers to a person's perception of the truth of a piece of information. It serves as a means for the receiver of the information to rate the source or transmitter of the communication in relation to the information. This rating correlates with the willingness of the receiver to attribute truth and substance to the information (Hovland et al. 1953, p. 21). Credibility is tied to information, and can thus be described as a communication phenomenon. Communication takes place between at least two parties. Any kind of communication between a supplier and a consumer that occurs with the intention of influencing economic transfers can be defined as marketing communication. A company or its representatives (e.g. salespersons) are the sources, whereas the consumer is the receiver of the message.

Research on the impact of source credibility belongs to the domain of persuasion research. Persuasion research deals with characteristics of the source, the message or the transmitter as independent variables whereas attitude formation or attitude change form the main dependent variables (see O'Keefe 1990; Perloff 1993). Beyond attitudes, other dependent variables are studied as well. The majority of the results indicate a positive effect of credibility on attitudes, cognitions, intentions and also subsequent behavior. However, some other variables (e.g. involvement, commitment) moderate the impact of source credibility, and some of those moderators can even reverse the effect so that a source having only moderate credibility can be more persuasive than a highly credible source (Sternthal et al. 1978).

Time can also be assumed to be such a moderating variable. Using a perspective of historical development (see Gronmo 1989), time represents a variety of occurrences and environmental changes and can be considered an all-embracing socio-temporal context variable. As this socio-temporal context has changed over the years, consumers and the way how they deal with communication from marketers will most likely have changed as well.

The assumption of changes over time is broadly supported by the idea of postmodernism. Postmodernism denotes and provides not only a philosophical framework or epistemological positions, but also marks an epochal phenomenon that is accompanied amongst other things by the rapid growth of new technologies, the rise of globalism and multiculturalism, and the waning of modern ideologies (Costa and Bamossy 1995; Firat and Venkatesh 1995, 1993). The transition from the modern to the postmodern period is a gradual shift and not a schism (van Raaij 1993). This transition has started in the 1960s and reaches different domains of society at a different pace. Main characteristics which describe conditions of postmodernism are pluralism and fragmentation which both lead to a liberalism of choices and a creation of insecurity in the context of consumption (Bouchet 1994; Firat and Venkatesh 1995). Pluralism leads to conditions where single ideologies have lost their dominance and consumers adopt a variety of values and lifestyles and at the same time refuse to obey authorities of modernity: skepticism is replacing dogmatism (van Raaij 1993). As a consequence, postmodern consumers seem to be more experienced as well as critical and skeptical about influences from marketers (Elliot et al. 1993). However, pluralism also leads to uncertainty since postmodern consumers now face a whole set of values, lifestyles, and symbols from which they have to choose (Bouchet 1994). In the context of communication, consumers also face an increasing information load.

These postulated changes attributed to the transition from modernism towards postmodernism can thus result in changes of attitudes and behavior towards influence techniques from marketers and particularly source credibility over the course of time. However, there are other reasons for expecting changes in source credibility effects over time. Kayande and Bhargava (1994) mention the improvement of data collection methods and analytical methods that may result in stronger relationships over time. Presumably also marketers have learned to use better credibility enhancers. These alternative explanations have to be considered when investigating the changes in source credibility effects over time. In the following section, we will formulate the hypotheses resulting from this delineation.

3 HYPOTHESES

Aforementioned postmodern consumers face a variety of small sets of ideologies, they increasingly refuse to obey any authorities and are claimed to be more experienced and critical. As a result, they have probably become more resistant to established influence techniques from marketers and are able to make out the usual credibility enhancing techniques used by marketers. Therefore, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H_{1a}: The impact of source credibility has decreased over the years.

However, another argumentation stands to reason. Pluralism of beliefs entails a challenge to the consumer who now has to choose from a huge variety of values, norms and lifestyles. As a consequence, consumers increasingly face uncertainty. Also in the context of communication, consumers face an increasing information load. Source credibility serves as a central factor in order to judge the veracity and quality of a message that can be easily and objectively assessed and trusted. It eases the evaluation of information, precludes extensive information research and thus reduces uncertainty. Therefore, consumers are likely to rely increasingly on source credibility. Therefore, we also assume the following hypothesis, which stands in contrast to the first:

H_{1b}: The impact of source credibility has increased over the years.

Both hypotheses suggest a significant correlation between time and source credibility effect sizes whereas the direction of the correlation pinpoints only one of both hypotheses. However, the magnitude of the correlation is supposed to differ with regard to various subsets which are important to marketers. Since personal communication is considered to be more persuasive than communication via media (Fill 2002), the credibility of sources with face-to-face contact to the consumer (e.g. salespersons) should increase or decrease more than the credibility of other sources (e.g. spokesperson in advertising).

H_{2a}: The magnitude of the correlation between time and source credibility effect sizes is greater for sources communicating face-to-face with the consumers than for other sources.

Another classification to be considered is the difference between services and goods. As services have a higher amount of experience and credence qualities than goods (Gabbott and Hogg 1994), the uncertainty of the consumer should be higher for services than for goods. Consequently, also the magnitude of the correlation between time and source credibility effect sizes should be higher for services than for goods. Again, the sign of the effect depends on an increasing resistance towards influencing strategies or an increasing use of source credibility as a reliable evaluation criterion by the consumers.

H_{2b}: The magnitude of the correlation between time and source credibility effect sizes is greater for services than for goods.

Furthermore, the strength of the effect patterns can also depend on the kind of variables affected by source credibility. Since credibility is often considered a cognitive phenomenon in information processing theories that influences mainly cognitions and attitudes (Perloff 1993), we expect a higher magnitude of the

correlation between time and source credibility effects for cognitions and attitudes compared to the magnitude of the correlation for all other dependent variables (e.g. behavior, emotions).

H_{2c}: The magnitude of the correlation between time and source credibility effect sizes is greater for cognitions and attitudes compared to other dependent variables.

4 METHODOLOGY

In order to synthesize the results of past studies, a meta-analysis was conducted. The methodological approach is described in this section.

4.1 Literature review

To identify relevant studies, a series of bibliographic searches was first carried out. A computerized bibliographic search using *Business Source Elite*, *ABI/Inform* (for business publications), *PsycINFO* and *PSYINDEX* (for psychology literature), the *Social Science Citation Index* and *Dissertation Abstracts* (for defended doctoral dissertations) was conducted. Additionally, an issue-by-issue examination of papers published in several important marketing journals since 1950 was conducted. Then, quotations of studies found were examined in order to identify further studies and unpublished manuscripts. The approach is consistent with recommendations made by several authors (e.g. Cooper 1982; Hunter and Schmidt 1990). However, the approach does not guarantee the constitution of a complete census of all relevant studies so that only a sample of relevant studies can be taken into account. All identified manuscripts were then inspected and selected in case they dealt with marketing communication as defined above and in case source credibility was explicitly under investigation as an independent variable and this independence was formulated in the hypotheses of the study. Results that dealt with separate dimensions of credibility were not considered if they couldn't be combined to credibility on the basis of theoretical assumptions of the study. As well, those results were excluded where credibility was used as an indicator for other constructs considered in the hypotheses. Based on these conditions and after excluding manuscripts using the same data as already included manuscripts, 46 manuscripts were found suitable for the purpose of the meta-analysis and provided enough data to calculate necessary effect sizes.

4.2 Analysis

The effect size metric selected for the analysis was the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient r between credibility and the dependent variables. The coefficient was chosen because it is an easily interpretable and scale-free measure. For studies that did not report correlations but other measures (e.g. Student's t , F -Ratios), those measures were converted to correlation coefficients by means of formula given by Hunter and Schmidt (1990, p. 272). In order to examine the variability of the correlations, a homogeneity test statistic Q based on Fishers's Z -transformation was applied (see Hedges and Olkin 1985, p. 235). In case of heterogeneity, a grand mean of the correlation coefficient has to be considered as an average rather than a common correlation value and the variability in the correlations may be due to other moderating variables. As a result, we can proceed to apply the time variable as a possible explanation for the variability of the correlation coefficients. The following regression model was estimated: $|Z| = \beta_0 + \sum \beta_i X_i + u_i$, where β_0 is the intercept and β_i are the regression coefficients to be estimated. The Fisher's Z -transformations of the r 's serve as values of the dependent variable in the model. Absolute values for the Z 's are used since it is consistent with the focus on the strength of temporal dependence of credibility effects, regardless of the sign.

X_i are the predictor variables. The critical predictor is the year of publication of the study which is used as indicator for the year of the effect measured. However, the effect of year which serves as a proxy for a variety of socio-temporal variables may be confounded with other possible third variables that might also have changed over the years and therefore further moderators were included. In particular these variables are:

- type of survey: field study vs. experimental research
- kind of dependent variable: behavioral intention measures vs. other variables
- measurement of dependent variable: number of scale items
- stimulus presentation: text only vs. combination with picture or audio-visual

Since the sample sizes were unequal across studies, a variance weighted analysis was performed (see Hedges 1994). The overall fit of the regression model can be tested by the variability accounted by the regression model which follows a chi-square distribution with five degrees of freedom (for five predictor variables) and therefore should exceed a value of 11.07 in order to be significant for $p < .05$. The effect of each predictor variable is tested by the unstandardised regression coefficients (see Lipsey and Wilson 2001).

5 RESULTS

Altogether, $k=167$ effects from 53 independent studies with $n=12341$ subjects were collected from the 46 manuscripts. The grand mean of the absolute values of the correlation coefficients indicates the highly significant value .293 (unweighted average r 's) respectively .320 (unweighted average Z 's) and .267 (weighted average Z 's). The correlations range from .00 to .88 and indicate heterogeneity of the effects which is approved by the test statistic ($Q=1673.697$, $p < .001$). Heterogeneous effect sizes are consistent with the notion that moderating variables of the effect measured may lead to different findings and explain the variability of the effect sizes. The regression model specified above was estimated to uncover the influence of the moderator variables on the strength of the effect sizes (Table 1). The analysis was performed for all correlations as well as for the subsets resulting from the hypothesis. There were no serious indications for autocorrelation or multicollinearity.

All effects of time on credibility effects are significant and directionally consistent with hypothesis 1b. Also other moderating variables showed significant effects but not consistently for all subsets. In order to test the hypotheses for the subsets, the correlations between time and source credibility effects (displayed by the weighted average Z 's) were compared for the corresponding subsets and tested (see Table 2).

The differences found were also consistent with our expectations. The impact of time for personal communication, for services and for cognitions and attitudes was stronger than for impersonal communication, for goods and for other dependent variables under investigation. The results are discussed in the following section.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results provide evidence that the credibility of sources in marketing communication is an effective variable in order to influence consumers. Furthermore, the results support the assumption that the impact of source credibility has even increased over the years and lead us to conclude that it is still valuable for marketers to be credible. The results lead to a number of interesting contributions for marketing practice as well as for future research efforts.

The main advice for practitioners is to be aware of the powerful technique of source credibility. Above all, service providers can profit by source credibility when using highly credible sources for personal encounters with customers or by teaching their service employees credibility enhancing techniques. Also marketing researchers should be aware of the increasing impact of source credibility in marketing communication. Our results are consistent with the notion of the increasing uncertainty and skepticism of consumers caused by postmodern phenomena such as pluralism and fragmentation. This epochal phenomenon is likely to explain the increasing role of source credibility as a factor that can be easily assessed and trusted. However, the results do not prove this rationale as well as the accurate reasons for the differential rise of the impact of source credibility for the subsets under investigation. Time serves as a proxy variable for a variety of phenomena. Therefore, some other explications about changes in source credibility effects are conceivable. To a great extent, these alternative explanations were considered by including moderating variables extracted from the studies. However, further research is needed to filter out the reasons for the described patterns besides the rationale mentioned above. Nevertheless, the context of the transition from modernism to postmodernism can be a vantage point to elicit those factors. Another question is the importance shift caused by the increasing impact of source credibility for other factors of persuasion, e.g. the style of a message: did those factors lose their impact over the years or not?

The data of the meta-analysis are used to explain time effects. However, the meta-analytic data can not substitute a longitudinal study involving the same sets of respondents over an extended period of time. Longitudinal studies provide the potential for more accurate inferences about the development of source credibility effects. They can explore the temporal patterns in more detail and investigate concrete reasons for temporal changes by integrating additional variables (e.g. economic or political conditions). Additional cross-sectional studies can ensure variability of source credibility effects within subgroups that could not be examined in this meta-analysis (e.g. different countries). In this sense, this meta-analysis can only provide first hints for further studies and is not considered a substitute for new primary research. However, it can provide guidance to upcoming surveys and to researchers interested in the concept of credibility in marketing communication.

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TABLE 1
WLS regression results of the impact of time on source credibility effects

<i>Subset</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>Variability Explained by model</i>	<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Unstandardized coefficient</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>z-test</i>	<i>p</i>
Personal communication	34	25.741	time	.020	.004	5.475	<.001
			survey type	.386	.094	4.127	<.001
			kind of d.v.	-.087	.073	1.179	.238
			d.v. measure	.005	.017	.277	.782
			stimulus presentat.	.376	.055	6.887	<.001
Impersonal communication	133	65.722	time	.007	.001	9.545	<.001
			survey type	-.219	.021	10.602	<.001
			kind of d.v.	.014	.018	.783	.434
			d.v. measure	-.015	.002	6.977	<.001
			stimulus presentat.	.202	.016	12.963	<.001
Services	20	72.258	time	.035	.005	7.465	<.001
			survey type	.280	.102	2.744	.006
			kind of d.v.	.451	.054	8.284	<.001
			d.v. measure	.005	.007	.680	.496
			stimulus presentat.	.039	.058	.674	.500
Goods	147	41.609	time	.002	.002	3.031	.002
			survey type	.117	.033	3.531	<.001
			kind of d.v.	-.025	.017	1.456	.145
			d.v. measure	-.015	.002	6.890	<.001
			stimulus presentat.	.186	.015	12.491	<.001
Cognitions/ attitudes ^a	96	41.758	time	.004	.001	3.890	<.001
			survey type	.133	.109	3.654	<.001
			d.v. measure	-.019	.003	7.000	<.001
			stimulus presentat.	.194	.019	10.374	<.001
Other dependent variables	71	58.961	time	.006	.002	3.380	<.001
			survey type	-.224	.031	7.284	<.001
			kind of d.v.	.108	.023	4.725	<.001
			d.v. measure	-.009	.003	2.725	.006
			stimulus presentat.	.160	.023	6.875	<.001
All effects	167	70.646	time	.008	.001	10.939	<.001
			survey type	-.177	.019	9.217	<.001
			kind of d.v.	.070	.015	4.565	<.001
			d.v. measure	-.014	.002	6.453	<.001
			stimulus presentat.	.164	.014	11.742	<.001

^a kind of d.v. is omitted since it is a constant for the subset

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TABLE 2
Comparison of the correlation between time and source credibility effects for the subsets

Subset				
Personal vs. impersonal communication	<i>weighed average Z's</i>	.354	vs.	.131*** a
	<i>k</i>	34	vs.	.133
Services vs. goods	<i>weighed average Z's</i>	.275	vs.	.051***
	<i>k</i>	20	vs.	.147
Cognitions /attitudes vs. all other dependent variables	<i>weighed average Z's</i>	.179	vs.	.136*** b
	<i>k</i>	96	vs.	71

^a difference is significant for $p < .001$

^b difference is significant for $p < .01$

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Navigating Between Virtues and Vices: Moderators of Decisions Involving Hedonic versus Utilitarian Choices

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Everyday choices often reflect an ongoing conflict between the desire for hedonic vices on the one hand (e.g. buying a DVD player or designer jeans, watching television) and the presumably more rational need for utilitarian virtues on the other (e.g. buying an electronic organizer or vacuum cleaner, studying). Given limitations on resources, people regularly face difficult decisions to either indulge in a vice or to exercise self-control and be virtuous.

This conflict can be viewed from several different perspectives. In the traditional literature the difficulty of such tradeoffs is not directly addressed. Rather, consumer decisions are assumed to be based on stable evaluations of utility (e.g. Von Neumann and Morgenstern 1947) and conscious choices guide moment-to-moment behaviors (e.g. Deci and Ryan 1985, Mischel, Cantor and Feldman 1996). Vices and virtues are evaluated on a common utility scale and higher utility options are consciously chosen and acted upon.

One alternative stream of literature explores myopic, short-sighted behavior, in which the utility of long-term benefits is overly discounted relative to short-term desires (e.g. Ainsle 1975; Loewenstein 1996; Hoch and Loewenstein 1991). The myopic focus on short-term benefits can lead to over-consumption of hedonic vices and insufficient allocation of resources to longer-term virtues.

Another stream of research focuses on the role of guilt and self-control in decisions about hedonic and utilitarian consumption (e.g. Dhar and Wertenbroch 2003; Kivetz and Simonson 2002a, 2002b; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). In this view, hedonic vices are difficult to justify and more painful to pay for (Prelec and Herrnstein 1991) and may induce guilt (Lascu 1991). Given the difficulty involved in such decisions, consumers may over-constrain their hedonic consumption (Kivetz 1999). Consumers who have difficulty choosing items that are perceived as indulgences may even pre-commit to luxuries in certain circumstances to avoid under-consumption due to self-control (Kivetz and Simonson 2002a).

This session explores the conditions under which people are more likely to act on their implicit desires for hedonic vices and under which they exercise greater restraint, favoring utilitarian virtues. The papers in this session raise important questions about contextual factors that may affect how the conflict between hedonic vices and utilitarian virtues is resolved. How are consumption timing decisions made for hedonic versus utilitarian options, and what is the effect of a salient cost? How do virtuous past actions affect relative preferences for hedonic versus utilitarian options? Are people more or less likely to act upon their implicit desires for vices after formulating behavioral intentions?

Taken together the papers attempt to uncover the processes which lead to choosing coveted but vice-full options in some conditions but not in others. Instead of considering these decisions in isolation, the papers in this session treat the decision process as context-dependent and often sequential, with current choices systematically connected to previous choices and behaviors. In the process of examining these issues, the papers extend beyond behavioral anomalies and provide insights into the underlying psychological mechanisms and moderators. The papers raise issues

of implicit versus explicit attitudes, conscious versus non-conscious processing, and personality-based differences in the susceptibility to guilt in the context of hedonic choices. This helps provide a framework for understanding how the conflict between the desire for hedonic experiences and the tendency for self-control is managed.

“Licensing Effect of Past Credentials on Sequential Choices”

Uzma Khan and Ravi Dhar

Consider two people who are similar in their wealth and lifestyle preferences. Both individuals perform community service on certain weeks and not on the others. Now assume that they are both at a mall to do some personal shopping. Who is more likely to buy something self-indulgent—the person who performed community service that week or the one who did not?

Most consumer choice literature focuses on decisions among a set of alternatives, independent of the manner in which consumer arrives at this choice. Recent research suggests that consumer choices across a sequence of decisions might be connected in systematic manner (Dhar & Novemsky 2003; Monin and Miller 2001; Dhar and Simonson 2000; Loewenstein & Prelec 1993). The current research examines how an initial choice involving a virtuous act (e.g., donating time or money to a charity) might reduce negative self-attributions associated with subsequent choices.

We illustrate the liberating effect of past actions in the context of choosing between options that are perceived as luxuries or necessities. While prior research in this area has used several labels somewhat interchangeably for the products (e.g., virtues and vices by Wertenbroch 1998, hedonic-utilitarian by Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000, luxury-necessity by Kivetz and Simonson 2002), a common assumption that underlies the distinction is that the purchase of luxury goods is associated with guilt and feelings of responsibility (Lascu 1991). Since consumers are often looking to justify their choices (Simonson 1989), these goods are at a disadvantage as they are often more difficult to justify than necessities. Generally speaking, the purchase of luxuries can be viewed as producing negative self-attribution since such consumptions are difficult to justify, induce greater guilt, and by definition, are not essential.

Three studies are conducted to demonstrate that the proportion of subjects choosing a more luxury item is higher after an unrelated charity involvement than in a control condition. An additional study is conducted to provide support for our theoretical explanation.

The first three studies use two between-subjects conditions in hypothetical choices to illustrate the proposed effect. In the control condition, subjects are asked to make a choice between two items. In the other condition, prior to making a choice between the same two items, subjects are asked to make a choice involving a virtuous act. Study 1 shows that the percentage of respondents who selected the luxury item (designer's jeans) over a necessity (vacuum cleaner) was greater in the condition where this choice was preceded by a choice on the type of community service to perform than in the control condition. Study 2 replicates this effect with two modifications: the initial virtuous act involved donating money (as opposed to time) and the items in the target set were from the same category but involved choosing between a high quality, high price and a low

quality, low price item. The third study extends the licensing effect to a buy/no-buy situation. Previous research (e.g. Prelec and Loewenstein 1998) suggests that purchase of hedonic/luxury goods often involve a pain of payment which increases the barrier to their purchase. Consistent with our main proposition that an initial virtuous decision reduces the negative self-attribution of making a luxury purchase, we demonstrate that percentage of respondents who purchase a concert ticket is higher after they make a decision about community service in comparison to the control condition.

We argue that engaging in altruistic acts give a boost in positive self-attributions. This reduces negative self-attributions associated with luxury items and make people more likely to choose such items. As a manipulation test, we measured participants self-rating on several personality traits. We find that as compared to the control condition, participants rated themselves significantly more compassionate, sympathetic, helpful, balanced, and warm after a choice on the type of community service to perform.

Finally, in the fourth study we provide evidence for the idea that the reduction in negative self-attribution due to a virtuous act is associated with a greater purchase of luxury items. Specifically, we show that the proposed licensing effect diminishes if the virtuous task can be attributed to some external motivation. In one condition we ask participants to imagine that they perform the community service as a result of a driving violation, while in the other condition they are told to imagine that *they* want to perform community service. We find that more people choose the luxury option over a necessity in the later condition. In conclusion, we discuss theoretical and managerial implications of our findings and suggest directions for future research.

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"Reconciling Impulsiveness with Self-Control: Explaining Differential Impatience toward Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption"

Oleg Urminsky and Ran Kivetz

Consumers often face purchase-timing decisions involving tradeoffs between when a good is received or consumed and the cost paid (e.g. prices that decrease over time, costs of expedited delivery, etc.). This paper addresses the question of which conditions motivate consumers to be more or less willing to accept monetary costs to receive goods sooner.

The notion that goods are discounted over time, with lower utility when deferred than in the present, is fundamental to modern economic theory (Strotz 1956). Therefore, given finite resources and implicit or explicit costs to receive goods sooner, timing preferences for different goods are often in conflict and inter-temporal choices may be made differently for hedonic versus utilitarian goods. One stream of research, centered on the notion of hyperbolic discounting, suggests that consumers discount benefits realized immediately ("vices") less than long-term benefits realized later ("virtues"), leading to a form of myopia in decision-making (Ainslie 1975; cf. Hoch and Loewenstein 1991). Relatedly, the notion of affect-dependent time discounting (Loewenstein 1996; Metcalfe & Mischel 1999; Mischel, Shoda and Rodriguez 1989; Vallacher 1993) suggests that goods higher in affective (i.e. hedonic) dimensions will be discounted more steeply over time than goods higher in cognitive (i.e. utilitarian) dimensions.

Another stream of research, however, focuses on the role of guilt and self-control in decisions about hedonic and utilitarian consumption (e.g. Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Kivetz and Simonson 2002a, 2002b; Prelec and Herrnstein 1991; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998; Thaler 1980). This research suggests that goods that provide the highest pleasure (i.e. desired hedonic items) inspire the most guilt (Lascu 1991) and, conversely, spending on utilitarian goods may be easier to justify and less painful (Kivetz 1999; Prelec and Loewenstein 1998). Indeed, consumers have been shown to utilize self-control mechanisms to resist the temptation of hedonic items or vices (e.g. Wertenbroch, 1998). In fact, research on mental accounting (e.g., Thaler 1985; Thaler and Johnson 1990) and mental budgeting (e.g., Heath and Soll 1996) suggests that consumers may not spend enough on hedonic items perceived as indulgence. Further, Kivetz and Simonson (2002a) argue that, for many consumers, a tendency to be overly far-sighted ("hyperopic") can lead to chronic underconsumption of hedonic luxuries. Such consumers are shown to employ deliberate self-control tactics, such as irreversible pre-commitments to hedonic consumption and experiences in low guilt situations.

This paper integrates both streams of research in the context of purchase-timing decisions for hedonic and utilitarian goods and provides a conceptual framework for when myopic, non-myopic, or even hyperopic choices are made. We argue that, while all goods are generally preferred sooner (cf. Loewenstein 1987; Loewenstein and Prelec 1993), there is a natural impulse to disproportionately desire hedonic goods earlier compared to more utilitarian goods. Thus, the baseline desire to expedite will be stronger for hedonic goods than utilitarian goods. Consumers' decisions, however, are typically not only affected by the desire to expedite hedonic goods, but also moderated by a higher-order process. Specifically, when choices involve salient costs and guilt-inducing hedonic luxuries, justifiability is assessed. When justifiability is perceived to be low, self-control behaviors are often triggered. The sensitivity of individuals to "luxury guilt" varies, and for those with high levels of such guilt, the self-control effect may be strong enough to lead to hyperopic choices (i.e. increased delay of hedonic consumption relative to utilitarian consumption of lower value).

These hypotheses were investigated in a series of studies using different goods and consumption activities as well as various delay mechanisms. Consumers were asked to make everyday choices involving a cost associated with more immediate consumption or ownership (e.g. deciding whether or not to wait for a cheaper price in the future, in a time period when prices were known to be falling). We found, in between subjects tests, that consumers delayed purchases of hedonic items (e.g. a DVD player) more than those of utilitarian items (e.g. a Palm Pilot organizer) that were equally or less desired. This finding is at odds with affective discounting, which indicates that hedonic goods should be discounted more steeply and customers should therefore place a greater value on receiving such items immediately, compared to otherwise equivalent utilitarian items.

We argue that the greater willingness to wait for hedonic goods is due to the exercise of self-control, particularly among consumers who tend to feel guilty about indulging themselves in the present and spending money on hedonic luxuries (i.e. high "luxury guilt" individuals). In fact, we find substantially more willingness to wait for the hedonic good among those with high luxury guilt (based on an individual difference scale) than among those with low luxury guilt. In contrast, we find no difference of luxury guilt, or even a small reverse effect, for the utilitarian goods. Thus, consistent with the notion that tempting items can give rise to self-control behavior in the presence of a monetary tradeoff, consumers with high luxury guilt defer hedonic goods but do not defer utilitarian goods, relative to consumers with low luxury guilt.

Additional experimental conditions demonstrate that reducing luxury guilt eliminates the tendency to delay purchases of hedonic compared to utilitarian goods. In these conditions, the choice options were the same, but a guilt-reducing manipulation was introduced (e.g. consumers chose when to use a gift certificate they had won in a raffle to buy a DVD player or a Palm Pilot). Across different studies, when such manipulations were employed, the difference in the timing of hedonic and utilitarian purchases was eliminated or even reversed, with consumers waiting longer for the utilitarian good than the hedonic good. Furthermore, in the alternative conditions designed to reduce the impact of guilt or when the tradeoff is non-monetary in nature (e.g. an extended warranty) and guilt is not induced, we found that consumers with low and high "luxury guilt" made similar choices and the pattern of differential timing for hedonic purchases-based on luxury guilt was eliminated.

The studies generalize these findings to other delay mechanisms (e.g., paying for expedited shipping; delayed availability of equivalent lower priced goods), different types of hedonic "vices" and utilitarian "virtues" (e.g., circus vs. planetarium tickets, office supplies vs. music CDs, even the same good framed as hedonic or utilitarian) and other guilt-reducing manipulations (bundled charity donations). Additional studies test boundary conditions of the effects, underlying mechanisms and alternative explanations.

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"License to Sin: The Liberating Role of Reporting Expectations"

Gavan J. Fitzsimons, Joseph Nunes and Patti Williams

Asking consumers to respond to questions has long been known to lead to biased responses, and more recently, to lead to changes in the behavior being asked about. Asking intention questions leads to increases in behavior if the behavior is desirable, and decreases if the behavior is undesirable (Morwitz, Johnson and

Schmittlein 1993; Sherman 1980) asking satisfaction questions can similarly lead to changes in behavior (Dhalokia and Morwitz 2002). Simply notifying consumers in advance that they will later be asked to evaluate their satisfaction with a product or service substantially changes the consumer's experience (Ofir and Simonson 2001). In a recent study, Williams, Fitzsimons and Block (in press) found a curious anomaly however: when they asked respondents to report likelihood of performing a socially undesirable activity it actually led to an increase in the behavior. The current paper argues that this result may be much more robust than would be expected in a particular domain—that of vice behaviors.

Vice behaviors have an unusual property that most other behaviors do not—while the consumer may on one level wish they did not smoke, drink etc., on another level they clearly desire to engage in the behavior. In our research we examine behaviors in this category in which the consumer holds a conscious, explicit attitude towards the behavior that is in opposition to a non-conscious, implicit attitude. In a series of three studies we show that asking consumers to report their expectations about how often they will perform the behavior leads to significantly greater performance of the behaviors (than if they had not been asked their expectations). The reporting of expectations appears to serve as a liberating influence and permit the consumer to indulge his or her implicit desires more frequently than would otherwise be the case.

In a first study, half of a group of students were asked to estimate how many classes they would miss at the beginning of a semester. Actual classroom attendance was taken at every class. In this context, students reported a desire not to miss many classes, although they appeared realistic (none predicted that they would miss "0" classes). For the control group not asked to make a prediction, the average number of classes missed was 2.95. Those asked to predict how many classes they would miss estimated 2.98, suggesting they were very well calibrated on how many classes they would typically miss. Interestingly, this group ended up missing 3.78 classes, substantially greater than the control group ($p < .01$). Predicting (even accurately predicting) the number of classes they would miss appeared to "allow" the respondents to miss more classes than they otherwise would.

In a second study, we attempt to provide a means of defense to respondents so that the act of predicting performance of a "guilty pleasure" won't lead to increases in the behavior. For two behaviors (drinking more than two alcoholic beverages in a sitting, and watching television instead of studying) participants were asked to predict frequency of the behavior. As in study 1, making a prediction appeared to serve a liberating role. Alcohol consumption rose as a function of making a prediction (both number of days alcohol was consumed, and maximum consumed in a sitting), as did the number of times they watched television instead of studying (3.93 times versus a control rate of 2.61, $p < .01$). However, when respondents were given defensive tools that heightened their explicit attitudes that drinking and wasting time watching television were to be avoided, they were able to eliminate the increase in the behavior caused by the act of prediction. Both tools tested increased the salience of the explicit goal to avoid the sinful behavior—implementation intentions (Gollwitzer et al 2001) and a pre-committed self reward—and thus counteracted the question-driven activation of the implicit desire to indulge.

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International Differences in Information Privacy Concern: Implications for the Globalization of Electronic Commerce

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Differences in information privacy concern in relation to the Internet have been found in national probability samples of consumers from the U.S., the UK, and Germany (IBM 1999). International differences in regulation of information privacy (e.g., the European Data Privacy Directive: EU 1995) are supposed to reflect these concerns. In this study, we examine three possible explanations for these different forms of Internet regulation: (1) these differences reflect and are related to differences in cultural values (Hofstede 1980, 1991; Milberg, Burke, Smith, and Kallman 1995); (2) these differences reflect differences in Internet experience and/or familiarity with Web privacy practices; and (3) they reflect differences in the desires of political institutions without reflecting underlying differences in privacy preferences. We surveyed Internet-using consumers from 38 countries and controlled for differences in demographics (Poortinga and Malpass 1986) to isolate the effects of cultural values, government regulation, Internet experience and knowledge of Web privacy practices, on concern for information privacy on the Net. We find support for (1), that cultural values are associated with differences in privacy preferences, which in turn are reflected in government regulation.

Our study focuses on information privacy, which Westin (1967) defined as the amount of control that individuals can exert over the type of information, and the extent of that information, revealed to others. Government regulation of information privacy in many countries is based on four core fair information practices: *notice* of collection practices, *choice* at least in the use of collected data, *access* to collected data, and *security* and integrity of data (e.g., FTC 1998). Smith, Milberg, and Burke (1996) defined four similar dimensions of *Concern for Information Privacy* (CFIP). *Collection* reflects the growing impression that companies are collecting unreasonable amounts of personal data. *Unauthorized Secondary Use* refers to the utilisation of a consumer's information without permission. *Improper Access* reflects the disclosure of personal information to unauthorized individuals. Finally, the *Errors* dimension describes concerns about inaccurate information in databases, either by accident or design.

Milberg et al. (2000) found that CFIP increased with higher levels of three of Hofstede's (1980, 1991) cultural values dimensions, *Power Distance Index* (PDI), *Individualism* (IND), and *Masculinity* (MAS), but decreased with higher levels of *Uncertainty Avoidance Index* (UAI). Milberg et al. (2000) also found a significant and positive relationship between government involvement in the regulation of privacy, and CFIP, and a positive relationship between existing government involvement in regulation and preference for more government regulation. We intended to replicate these findings using a sample of consumers. We also hypothesized that familiarity with Web privacy practices may reduce CFIP. For example, Culnan (1995) found that consumers who were aware of name removal procedures for "opting out" of direct mailing lists were less concerned about information privacy. The need for more consumer education is a typical recommendation in the conclusion of academic studies (e.g., Culnan 1995; Whitman, Perez, and Beise 2001). Recently, industry groups in the U.S. such as TRUSTe (Benassi 1999) have been spending millions of dollars

on education programs to try to reduce consumers' privacy concerns and demands for increased government regulation.

We recruited 534 Internet-using consumers from 38 countries. Respondents completed an online survey in English consisting of the Smith et al. (1996) CFIP scale (adapted for CFIP at Web sites), two scenarios that elicited CFIP in a relatively lower-sensitivity context (purchases recorded on a bonus card at a physical store) versus a relatively higher-sensitivity context (medical and financial information collected by a Web site), an item that measured concern about the security of online transactions, and six items that formed an index of knowledge about Web privacy practices (e.g., TRUSTe, "cookies"). Cultural values were measured using Hofstede's (1980, 1991) country scores for the same four dimensions used by Milberg et al. (2000), for replication purposes, although we acknowledge concerns about Hofstede's imposition of a westernized scale on all cultures (e.g., Chinese Culture Connection 1987). Government involvement in regulation was classified into five categories developed by Milberg et al. (1995) using Privacy International's (1998) survey of international privacy laws. MANCOVA was used to test whether the hypothesized covariates—cultural values, government regulation, and Web privacy knowledge—significantly reduced differences in CFIP across six regions: the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, other countries from Continental Europe that were current members of the EU, Australia and New Zealand, and Other Countries. The MANCOVA also controlled for individual differences in demographics and Internet experience.

Respondents from countries with relatively higher overall cultural values scores indicated significantly lower CFIP. This effect was in the opposite direction to the finding of Milberg et al. (2000). Follow-up analyses showed that this effect was due mainly to the IND dimension of cultural values, and was consistent with previous findings that people from high IND countries (such as the U.S.) are less concerned about disclosing private information than people from low IND countries (e.g., Ting-Toomey 1991). Replicating Milberg et al. (2000) and Milberg et al. (1995), respondents from countries with higher levels of government regulation were more concerned about Errors, but less concerned about the security of transactions on the Net, which has generally been the focus of government regulation. Also, consumers from countries with already high levels of government regulation of information privacy were more likely to favor the introduction of even stronger regulation. The effect of Web privacy knowledge was not significant, which suggests that consumer education may not decrease CFIP, at least for Internet consumers with high levels of education, as our sample had. Internet experience reduced CFIP.

There were significant residual differences between the six regions. Respondents from every other region were more in favor of government regulation than U.S. consumers. Compared to respondents from the U.S., respondents from the UK and Ireland expressed significantly greater CFIP overall. These results suggest that managers should select a range of options, at the regional level if not the country level, from which customers could personalize their privacy preferences.

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Impact of Culture on Cognition: An Evaluation of Judgment and Choice Processes Through a Collectivist Lens

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The marketing and psychology literatures identify a distinction between judgment and choice processes. However, Western (individualistic) perspectives dominate the discussion.

Judgment and choice processes, as studied to date, have always looked at likely outcomes in the context of the decision maker alone (the “I” perspective). The objectives in the decision tasks have always been assumed to be self-serving (such as maximizing personal utility; a notable exception to this argument is the study by Park (1982) that discussed the muddling through approach in decision-making in the context of husband–wife dyad. In this study, he showed that the members of the dyad rely on conflict avoiding strategies while making a decision. Thus, maximizing personal utility may not drive the decision task).

In the extant literature, judgment processes have been identified as optimizing procedures wherein the decision maker may use compensatory strategies. They are associated with extensive information search and critical evaluation of alternatives. Choice, on the other hand, has been shown to be a simplifying procedure wherein the decision maker utilizes non-compensatory strategies. Choice processes involve elimination of alternatives by utilizing attribute-based information processing, thus concentrating on the differences between various alternatives.

This paper argues that the judgment and choice processes will be different if they were examined across individualist and collectivist cultures. Based on current understanding about the individualist and collectivist cultures, this paper argues that cultural orientation would impact the decision objectives. This difference in decision objectives would change the criteria behind the judgment and choice processes, thus changing their structure.

The propositions, if supported, would add new insight to our current thinking about judgment and choice processes. They might show that these two cognitive processes are structurally opposite across individualist and collectivist cultures. We would understand that judgment processes in collectivist cultures are driven by simplifying objectives and involve non-compensatory, attribute-based comparisons. We would also understand that choice in collectivist cultures would be driven by optimizing objectives and would involve compensatory, alternative-based comparisons. Additionally, we would understand that choice processes in collectivist cultures involve extensive information search and are characterized by the addition of others’ perspectives to one’s own.

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Culture's Influence on Consumer Behaviors: Differences Among Ethnic Groups in a Multiracial Asian Country

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of culture on various aspects of consumer behavior in an integrative framework among the three ethnic groups in Singapore. Using the Hofstede's (1980) cultural framework, differences in their cultural orientation are hypothesized. Then, for each cultural dimension, related consumer behaviors are identified and differences in those behaviors are hypothesized according to the predicted differences in each related cultural dimension. Although the results seem to suggest that culture may be one of the major factors that influence the consumption behaviors, the strong evidence for the link between the Hofstede's framework and the related consumer behaviors is not observed in this study.

INTRODUCTION

As companies head towards a global market that deals with people from many different backgrounds and cultures, it has become essential for marketers to understand culture's influence on consumer behaviors. The recognition of the importance of culture on consumer behaviors has led to an increasing amount of research across cultures (Sojka and Tansuhaj 1995). More significantly, many studies have succeeded in establishing links between culture and consumer behaviors (McCracken 1986). According to Wallace (1965), culture is the all-encompassing force which forms personality, which in turn is the key determinant of consumer behaviors.

Numerous cultural studies on consumer behavior have been conducted, especially in western context. In those studies, differences were found in consumption patterns between people of various ethnic groups (e.g. Saegert, Hoover and Hilger 1985) and various geographic subgroups that hold differing cultural values (e.g. Gentry, Tansuhaj, Manzer and John 1988). For instance, researchers have found differences in various consumer behavior aspects such as brand loyalty (Saegert et al. 1985), decision making (Doran 1994), novelty seeking and perceived risk (Gentry et al. 1988) across subcultures. Although past research has identified differences in various consumer behaviors across cultures, most of the past studies dissected consumer behaviors and each study examined one or two specific aspects in a piecemeal-based way. There has been relatively little effort to examine the culture's influence on consumer behaviors in an integrated framework.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the effects of culture on various aspects of consumer behavior in an integrative framework. Using the Hofstede's (1980) cultural framework, various consumer behaviors that could be influenced by culture are identified and mapped to the Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Then, the influence of the cultural dimensions on the identified consumer behaviors is investigated in a multiracial Southeast Asian country.

SINGAPORE: A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY

Although numerous subcultural studies were done in the past, most are done in the American or European context. Few have investigated ethnic effects in the Asian context. With major corporations seeking to move into Asia and sell to Asian consumers, it is surprising to note the lack of subcultural research in this region.

Singapore provides a good starting point for subcultural studies on Asian customers as it is a multiracial society of Chinese,

Malays and Indians. During the years when Singapore was under British rule, the three ethnic groups lived separately from each other. They were encouraged to maintain their own unique culture and customs, religious values and way of life. Although national harmony has been emphasized, it has been encouraged to maintain each ethnic group's own culture by the Singapore government since its independence.

The Chinese

The concept of 'face' or "public reputation" is a very important value in the Chinese culture in the context of interpersonal interaction and social exchange. A mirror reflection of the 'face' concept is the idea of gaining respect, or the concern for public reputation. The concept of 'face' points to an inner sense of worth which is experienced by the ego (Wong 1986; Wong and Ahuvia 1998). According to Hu (1944), the emotional impact of the loss of 'face' could constitute a real dread affecting the psyche of the ego more strongly than physical fear. Hence, the Chinese tend to place high importance on the protection of 'face'.

In addition, the granting of 'face' and the maintenance of cordial *guanxi* have been highly valued and widely practiced in the Chinese community, particularly in the business community (Tan 1986). According to Alston (1989), the term *guanxi* refers to the special relationship two persons have with each other. It is a relationship combined with reciprocity and connections. A practical consequence of *guanxi* is that personal loyalty is often more important than organizational affiliation or legal standards.

According to Bond (1987), loyalty is considered to be a virtue by the Chinese. The Chinese have been taught from young to place their loyalty to their family and kin. In the case of services, where there is interpersonal contact, Chinese consumers would tend to stay loyal to the same provider. This is because switching would render a loss of face to the provider, an unfavorable move that a Chinese customer would choose to avoid.

The Malays

Islam is regarded as an inseparable part of Malay ethnicity and is ingrained in its culture (Li 1989). It has been reported that 99.6% of Malays are Muslims (Singapore Census of population 2000). The *Qur'an*, the revealed word of God provides definite guidelines for people in all walks of life to follow. The guidance is comprehensive and includes the social, economic, political, moral and spiritual aspects of life. It states clearly the *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (forbidden). To the Muslims, there is no compartmentalization between religion and secular aspects of life, rather they see life as an integrated whole and they aim to live out Islam in all areas of their life. Indeed, the cumulative institutionalization of Islamic values and practices in Malay life is the single most important influence on the development of Malay culture in Singapore presently (Tham 1985).

According to Bedlington (1971; 1974), the Malay idea of *rezeki*, or belief in the predetermination of man's economic destiny, results in fatalism and a "lack of will to go on striving." As a result of placing their full trust in *Allah* to provide for them in times of need and distress, Malays are reported to avoid taking up insurance policies. To them, they only take it up if it is compulsory (e.g., car

insurance). This element of fatalism is also perceived to be the likely explanation behind the lack of achievement orientation among the Malays (Li 1989).

The Indians

Caste ideas or beliefs still operate among members of the Indian community in Singapore despite the fact that the structural props supporting the caste system are no more there in its entirety. The central religious tenet of orthodox Hinduism was that men were not equal and have never been (Tham 1985). The inequality of men was explained in terms of the merits and demerits accrued in previous incarnations. Therefore, each caste was required to live according to its ordained way of life (*dharma*). However, in the contemporary and meritocratic society of Singapore, the caste system has little functional value except when Indians themselves use it as a cultural marker to distinguish their members (Wu 1982).

As compared to the Chinese and Malays, there exists much lesser marketing literature on Indian consumers in Singapore. One speculation for this lack of research pertained to their size as well as the vast diversity within the Indian community itself. The official category of "Indian" is actually composed of its many linguistic groups, Pakistanis, and Ceylonese. Besides this, it is the group with the greatest heterogeneity in religion (please refer to Table 1). Religion, like ethnicity influences behaviors by the rules and taboos it inspires. There is also suggestion that the Indian orientation has disappeared among a vast majority of the population, persisting only among the most elderly Indians. Even so, it appears in a remote idealistic sense, in the form of "nostalgia and emotional attachment of the place where they came from" (Arasaratnam 1979).

CULTURAL DIFFERENCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIORS

Having reviewed the key cultural tradition of the three ethnic groups, the differences in cultural values and associated consumer behaviors exhibited by the ethnic groups will be analyzed using Hofstede's (1980) cultural framework in this section.

Individualism-Collectivism

Family is important to all three ethnic groups, as is the case for most Asians. However, differing levels of collectivism could be detected among three ethnic groups in Singapore. The Malays see life as an integrated whole. According to Tham (1985), 53.8% of Malay respondents in his study listed loyalty to one's culture and way of life as an important value in their culture. This same value was listed by 40% of Indian respondents. However, it was not named at all by the Chinese respondents. The Malays believe that their religion holds them together as a community and it is from Islam that they derive their collective identity (Lai 1995). This is evidenced by the fact that 99.6% of all Malays in Singapore have Islam as their religion.

The Indians maintain that family solidarity should be shared by all relatives (Arasu 1975), and all members of the family should be integrated into the community. In Singapore, social and religious functions relating to marriage, birth and death are treated as important occasions among the Indians and this practice helps to maintain family and community solidarity among Indians.

The Chinese in Singapore tend to remain loyal only to their immediate family. For instance, they are concerned with propagating the family name (Wu 1975). However, in a recent study on Singaporean values by Kau, Tan and Wirtz (1998), it was found that the emphasis placed by the Chinese on family is rapidly diminishing. Only 67.4% of Chinese respondents agreed with the statement: "My family is the single most important thing to me", which was much lower than the percentages of Malays and Indians who agreed

(78.2% and 80.2% respectively). When presented with the statement: "Conforming to social norms is very important to me", 39.7% of Chinese respondents agreed with the statement as compared to 53.7% of Malays and 55.3% of Indians. This could be due to the influence of Western values, as well as an increase in affluence. Furthermore, many Chinese move out of their parents' home when they get married, so there is the loss of intergenerational family togetherness. Those trends could account for the lesser emphasis on collectivism on the part of the Chinese. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: The Chinese will exhibit higher levels of individualism, compared to the Indians and the Malays.

Individualism-collectivism pertains to the behavior of people in groups, their relationships with others around them, and how they perceive themselves in relation to others. We can identify several consumer behaviors that could be related to the relationships between individuals and their interaction with the people around them. They are reference group influence (Childers and Rao 1992; Webster and Faircloth III 1994), information sharing (Hirshman 1981; Webster 1992), opinion leadership (Ownbey and Horridge 1997) and ethnocentrism (Shimp and Sharma 1987). Based on the assumption that individualism-collectivism is one of the fundamental cultural dimensions that influences the related consumer behaviors, it could be said that people from cultures high in individualism would be less influenced by reference groups, less likely to engage in information sharing, less likely to be opinion leaders and are less ethnocentric. Hence, the following ethnic differences are hypothesized:

H2a: The Chinese are less likely to be influenced by reference groups compared to the Indians and the Malays.

H2b: The Chinese are less likely to engage in information sharing compared to the Indians and the Malays.

H2c: The Chinese are less likely to be opinion leaders compared to the Indians and the Malays.

H2d: The Malays and Indians are more likely to exhibit ethnocentric behaviors compared to the Chinese.

Uncertainty Avoidance

The Malays, with their fatalistic nature and their belief that everything is predestined and out of their control, may rank the lowest in terms of uncertainty avoidance. This is because their trust in their religion allows them greater tolerance for ambiguity and risk. A study by Yeo (1997) found that the Malays had the lowest levels of brand loyalty and perceived risk as compared to the Chinese and the Indians.

The Chinese also seem to show a tendency of uncertainty avoidance. This could be attributed to the need of the Chinese to adhere to group norms in order to protect one's 'face'. This may result in more image consciousness among the Chinese when they select socially visible products. In addition, Buddhists or Taoists also have inclinations towards seeking religious divinations when it comes to making decisions in difficult life situations (Khou 1996). This indicates that the Chinese may have a certain level of uncertainty avoidance inherent in the culture. However, the level of uncertainty avoidance, though expected to be lower than that of the Indians, is likely to be higher than that of the Malays. This is because only 64.4% of the Chinese are Buddhists or Taoists, compared to the 99.6% of Malay Muslims.

On the other hand, several studies have suggested that Asian Indians tend to have lower tolerance levels of ambiguity, risk and anxiety compared to subjects from America, Canada and Japan (Carament 1974; Orpan 1983). A study by Yeo (1997) confirmed this tendency by finding that Singaporean Indians placed an emphasis on product quality rather than brand when it came to making purchases. Hence, the following hypothesis is suggested:

- H3:* The Indians will exhibit the highest level of uncertainty avoidance, followed by the Chinese, then the Malays.

Uncertainty avoidance refers to how the unknown aspects of the future are dealt with. Extreme uncertainty causes anxiety and stress, and different people have different degrees of tolerance for such anxiety and stress. Different levels of uncertainty avoidance tendency could influence consumer behaviors that examine the ways people react in situations of uncertainty. Those behaviors could be perceived risk (Gentry et al. 1988), brand loyalty (Kanwar and Pagiavlas 1992; Hui et al. 1993), innovativeness (Hui et al. 1993; Tansuhaj et al. 1991), and information search (Garner and Thompson 1986; Hirshman 1983). These behaviors involve an element of risk, and therefore a culture that is high on uncertainty avoidance would exhibit consumption behaviors that may reduce this risk. Thus, people from such a culture would be likely to experience higher levels of perceived risk, more brand loyal, less likely to seek innovative products, and more likely to engage in information search. Thus, the following hypotheses are presented:

- H4a:* The Indians are likely to experience the highest levels of perceived risk in consumption, followed by the Chinese, then the Malays.
- H4b:* The Indians are most likely to remain brand loyal in their purchase of products and services, followed by the Chinese, then the Malays.
- H4c:* The Indians are least likely to seek out innovative products or services, followed by the Chinese, then the Malays.
- H4d:* The Indians are the most likely to engage in information search, followed by the Chinese, then the Malays.

Masculinity

It seems that there is evidence that sex role differentiation is still rather prominent in the Malay culture. Traditionally, Malay men want their wives to be submissive to the husband, and stay at home full-time to look after the children. This has not been changed much in modern Singapore. According to several studies, Muslim men still hold conservative socio-cultural attitudes regarding marriage. They feel that their authority in the house should not be challenged, and prefer their wives not to be graduates (The Straits Times 29/11/1995; 5/12/1995). Only 23.9% of Malay male graduates tied the knot with fellow graduates compared to the national average of 59.3% (The Straits Times 29/11/1995). Most of these men still prefer marriages arranged by their parents, and marrying down is the norm among them. These conservative attitudes are further evidenced by the fact that working wives make up only a third of all Malay couples, way below the figures of the Chinese and the Indians (The Straits Times 5/12/1995).

The Indians are becoming increasingly modernized compared to the Malays. Traditionally steeped in the notion that women belong in the house and should look after children full-time, this

view is changing with increased education and achievements by the Indian community in Singapore. 40% of all married Indian women work, second only to the 41% of Chinese women (The Straits Times 3/5/1994). Traditional Chinese women tended to stay at home to look after the household and the children. However, this has been changed in Singapore, as statistics have shown. Many Chinese women today are economically independent and perfectly capable of looking after themselves. Therefore, both the Chinese and the Indians would not be high on masculinity.

However, in a local lifestyle study conducted by Kau et al. (1998), it was found that the Indians had the most liberal views on feminism compared to the Chinese and the Malays. 78.5% of them felt that a woman should have her own career, while 63.4% of Chinese and 59.1% of Malays thought so. An even more interesting point to note was that 37.9% of the Indians agreed with the statement: "Women are smarter than men", while only 18% of Malays and 13.1% of Chinese felt so.

The above observations lead to the conclusion that the Malays have the most prevalent values regarding sex role differentiation, followed by the Chinese, while the Indians are the most profeminists. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

- H5:* The Malays are likely to rate the highest on masculinity, followed by the Chinese, and then the Indians.

The cultural dimension of masculinity-femininity involves sex role differentiation and the dominance of either male or female values. This area of study is particularly of interest in the context of the cultural dimension of masculinity-femininity because sex role attitudes and perceptions are ascribed through cultural norms and these attitudes influence the household decision role structure and responsibility (Kim, Laroche and Zhou 1993; O'Connor, Sullivan and Pogorzelski 1985). Blood and Wolfe (1960) also stated that the degree of influence by either the husband or wife in a family decision is contingent upon the level of traditional marital values present in the family. It can be concluded that decision making in the family differs across cultures and is dependent upon the extent to which the couple's values belong to the traditional patriarchal system where the husband dominates, or the more modern view of joint decision-making. Thus, people from cultures higher in masculinity are more likely to engage in husband dominant decision making because they believe that men should be in charge of the household.

- H6:* The Malays are the most likely to engage in husband dominant decision making, followed by the Chinese, and then the Indians.

Power Distance

The Indian religion of Hinduism states that men are not equal and have never been. This resulted in caste differentiation which may still exist informally in Singapore today, though not in its entirety. Similarly, the Malays, because of their fatalistic nature, willingly accept concepts of inequality and they accept that being born unequal is part of each person's destiny in life and cannot be altered. The Chinese on the other hand, are not governed by any beliefs of this sort. Although all three ethnic groups share the values of respect for one's elders and filial piety, there is evidence that these traditional perceptions of inequality result in different degrees of power distance among the three ethnic groups. According to Kau et al. (1998), when presented with the statement: "Respect for authority is important in our society", 77.4% of Indian respondents agreed with the statement, followed by 72.2% of the Malays and 61.8% of the Chinese. Hence the following hypothesis is presented:

H7: The Malays and Indians will exhibit higher levels of power distance than the Chinese.

Opinion seeking could be one aspect that could be affected by the differing degrees of power distance. Opinion seekers are those who actively seek advice from others (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1990). Generally, there will be significant numbers of opinion seekers in cultures with high power distance. Therefore, people from cultures with a large power distance are more likely to be opinion seekers than those from cultures with a small power distance. Hence, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H8: The Malays and Indians are more likely to show opinion-seeking tendency than the Chinese.

METHODOLOGY

Samples

The research data was collected by means of a survey. The sampling unit was a married Singaporean individual, either Chinese, Malay or Indian because as one of the consumer behaviors involved is family decision making which looks at the interaction between husband and wife. A method of snowball sampling was employed in the distribution of the questionnaires in order to get respondents from each ethnic group.

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and 258 were returned, thus the response rate was 86%. Among them, 27 questionnaires were rejected either because the respondents were not from one of the three ethnic groups studied, were unmarried, or the questionnaires were not adequately completed, resulting in 231 valid samples. The sample comprised of 83 Chinese (35.9%), 75 Malays (32.5%) and 73 Indians (31.6%). The respondents did not appear to differ in terms of gender or age. As the requirement was for respondents to be married, there were also no significant differences in this aspect.

Measures

The cultural dimensions are measured using Hofstede's (1980) framework. However, the original values scales used by Hofstede (1980) contained work-organization related questions which cannot be directly applied in this study. Hence, an adapted version of survey questions was used from various sources (Triandis et al. 1986, 1988; Lao 1977; Scanzoni and Szinovacz 1980) which met more closely with the needs of this study. The scales were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) the scale should be generic in its nature, unlike Hofstede's values module survey which pertained to work; and (2) the scale should fit accurately to the descriptions of the four cultural dimensions outlined by Hofstede. Using this method, a list of statements was generated, screened individually for their face validity and a final list of twenty items obtained.

Measures for consumer behaviors were directly adapted from past studies (Park and Lessig 1977; Hirschman 1981; Hui et al. 1993; Shimp and Sharma 1987; Raju 1980; Oliver and Bearden 1985; Green et al. 1983; Wells and Tigert 1971). With the exception of information sharing and family decision making, all items were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "1" for "Strongly Disagree" to "5" for "Strongly Agree" including measures for the cultural dimensions. Information sharing was measured by asking the frequency of providing information to others on a five-point scale, ranging 1 for "Very low frequency" to 5 "Very high frequency." Family decision making was measured for grocery and major home appliances in four aspects such as when to buy, where to buy, what to buy, and how much to pay on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 for "Husband decide" to 5 for "Wife decide."

RESULTS

Differences in Cultural Dimensions

The results of ANOVA tests on the cultural dimensions show no difference among the three ethnic on individualism/collectivism ($F=1.11$, $p=.33$), uncertainty avoidance ($F=.91$, $p=.40$), and power distance ($F=.12$, $p=.88$), rejecting H1, H3, and H7. The three ethnic groups show significance differences on the masculinity dimension ($F=17.79$, $p=.00$). The pair-wise comparisons with Duncan test reveal significant differences among the three ethnic groups as predicted. Therefore, H5 is supported (Table 1).

Differences in Associated Consumer Behaviors

Although no significant difference is found on the relevant cultural dimensions, significant differences are found on the utilitarian reference group influence ($F=6.37$, $p=.00$), the information sharing ($F=4.88$, $p=.01$), the ethnocentric tendency ($F=8.11$, $p=.00$), and the brand loyalty ($F=4.37$, $p=.01$). As for the ethnic differences, the Malays tend to be more ethnocentric and to share information more than the Chinese and the Indians, whereas the Indians tend to be less brand loyal and less likely to be influenced by the utilitarian reference group information compared to other ethnic groups (Table 2).

It is found that the three ethnic groups differ in their family decision-makings. For grocery products, there is significant differences in means across the three groups for "when to buy" ($F=2.42$, $p=.09$) and "how much to pay" ($F=6.52$, $p=.00$). The pair-wise comparisons with Duncan test show that the Chinese and Indians wives dominate decisions of "when to buy" and "how much to pay" compared to the Malays. As for "where to buy", the Malays and Indians were significantly more husband dominated than the Chinese, while the Malays were more husband dominated than the Chinese for the aspect of "what to buy". It can be seen that the Malays were consistently more husband dominant in decision making than the Chinese. Thus hypothesis 6 was partially supported in grocery product category.

When it comes to major appliances, F-tests results again showed significant differences among the three groups for "when to buy" ($F=5.14$, $p=.01$) and "how much to pay" ($F=2.66$, $p=.07$). According to the pair-wise comparisons among the ethnic groups, the decisions of the Chinese and Indians were more wife dominated than the Malays for the aspects of "what to buy" and "where to buy". In addition, the Chinese wives took part in more decision making than the Malays when it came to "how much to pay". Again, the main differences found were those for the Chinese who were more influenced by the wife than the Malays. Therefore, hypothesis 6 was partially supported in major appliance category (Table 3).

DISCUSSIONS

Among the four cultural dimensions outlined by Hofstede (1980), the dimension of masculinity produces a significant difference among the three ethnic groups. The low masculinity rating for the Indians suggests that they have discarded traditional sex role ideas and are receptive to Western ideas of equality between sexes, and changes in gender roles. This can be seen from statistics which show that the percentage of working Indian women enjoyed the greatest increase of 12.6% among the three ethnic groups between 1980 and 1990 (Singapore Census of Population 1980; 1990). In addition, as the Indians become more affluent and enjoy greater achievements in their careers, the percentage of educated Indians also increases proportionately (The Straits Times 3/5/1994). Thus the Indians, especially the younger ones, find it easier to accept feminist ideas and values. On the other hand, the Chinese may still retain some of the traditional teachings that define

TABLE 1
Mean Cultural Dimensions Among the Ethnic Groups*

Cultural Dimensions	Chinese (n=83)	Malays (n=75)	Indians (n=73)	F	F-Prob
H1: Individualism	2.85	2.73	2.87	1.11	0.33
H3: Uncertainty Avoidance	3.03	3.02	3.13	0.91	0.40
H5: Masculinity	3.00 ^a	3.35 ^b	2.62 ^c	17.79	0.00
H7: Power Distance	2.47	2.49	2.44	0.12	0.88

* Different letters (a, b, c) indicate significant differences between groups at 0.05 level with Duncan tests.

TABLE 2
Mean Consumer Behavior Ratings Among the Ethnic Groups*

Consumer Behaviors	Chinese (n=83)	Malays (n=75)	Indians (n=73)	F	F-Prob
H2a: Reference Group Influence					
Informational	3.10	3.07	2.94	0.97	0.38
Utilitarian	3.02 ^a	2.96 ^a	2.64 ^b	6.31	0.00
Value Expressive	2.66	2.70	2.47	1.70	0.19
H2b: Information sharing	2.73 ^a	3.01 ^b	2.73 ^a	4.88	0.01
H2c: Opinion Leadership	3.18	3.14	3.16	0.11	0.90
H2d: Ethnocentrism	2.46 ^a	2.72 ^b	2.29 ^a	8.11	0.00
H4a: Perceived Risk	3.42	3.43	3.37	0.33	0.72
H4b: Brand Loyalty	3.17 ^a	3.15 ^a	2.84 ^b	4.37	0.01
H4c: Innovativeness	2.76	2.90	2.83	0.85	0.43
H4d: Information Search	3.08	3.03	3.06	0.16	0.85
H8: Opinion Seeking	3.02	3.01	2.86	1.00	0.37

* Different letters (a, b, c) indicate significant differences between groups at 0.05 level with Duncan tests

TABLE 3
Mean Family Decision Making Ratings Among the Ethnic Groups*

Family Decision Making Aspect	Chinese (n=83)	Malays (n=75)	Indians (n=73)	F	F-Prob
Grocery Products:					
When to buy	4.05 ^a	3.69 ^b	3.96 ^a	2.42	0.09
Where to buy	3.88 ^a	3.61 ^b	3.58 ^b	1.70	0.18
What to buy	4.06 ^a	3.75 ^b	3.89	2.16	0.12
How much to pay	3.76 ^a	3.11 ^b	3.56 ^a	6.52	0.00
Major Appliances:					
When to buy	2.88 ^a	2.40 ^b	2.78 ^a	5.14	0.01
Where to buy	2.69 ^a	2.44 ^b	2.68 ^a	1.56	0.21
What to buy	2.70	2.75	2.71	0.05	0.95
How much to pay	2.77 ^a	2.40 ^b	2.59	2.66	0.07

* Different letters (a, b, c) indicate significant differences between groups at 0.05 level with Duncan tests.
Scales are rated from 1-“ husband decided” to 5-“ wife decided”

strict gender roles and this could be the reason why they were rated higher than the Indians in terms of masculinity. This is especially evident in the socialization of children where girls will be clothed in pink, boys in blue, and the girls will play with dolls and the boys with guns. As for the Malays, they still hold traditional attitudes which state that the wife has to be submissive to the husband, and women should not be graduates and should not work (The Straits Times 29/11/1995; 5/12/1995). This resulted in them rating the highest on masculinity.

However, the differences are not as evident in the other three cultural aspects. This may be due to the ethnic integration efforts done by Singapore government. After Singapore became independent in 1965, the government began to promote ethnic integration. A situation of common national identity was constructed. All the communities were accorded equal status and rights, and given the fullest freedom to preserve their distinct ethnic culture, heritage and identity.

Among the 10 examined consumer behavior variables that were assumed to be influenced by the cultural dimensions, significant ethnic group differences are observed on utilitarian reference group influence, information sharing, ethnocentrism, brand loyalty, and family decision making behaviors. Although significant, the differences do not support the hypothesized cultural influence on consumer behaviors except for the family decision making behavior. A possible interpretation could be that the cultural dimensions developed by Hofstede (1980) may lack their validity in explaining consumer behaviors because they were not developed in the context of consumer behaviors and practices. If this is the case, their applicability to consumer behaviors is questionable and we may need other cultural frameworks to find better links between culture and consumer behaviors. However, the link between the masculinity and the family decision making behavior suggests that the Hofstede's cultural framework could be, at least in some aspects, a valid cultural framework within the Singaporean context of Chinese, Malays and Indians.

There are a few proposed directions for future research. Firstly, future studies should continue to investigate relationships between culture and consumer behaviors in order to come up with more specific relationships between them. To do this, future researchers should look into other cultural models than Hofstede's (1980), which could help us to find better links between culture and related consumer behaviors. Similarly, consumer behaviors other than the ones investigated in this study should also be examined in future research in order to develop a full picture of the way culture impacts behaviors. This study should also be extended to specific products or services, and to more demographically diverse samples of Chinese, Malays and Indians.

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Examining Consumer Behavior in the Liberalized German Energy Market—The Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Willingness to Switch Public Utility Companies

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In most European countries (e.g., Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain), the energy industry continues to undergo dramatic changes. Amidst a progressing liberalization of European energy markets, customer relationship management (CRM) concepts and their central goal—customer retention—are playing an increasingly significant role in the marketing considerations of energy supply companies. Yet, surprisingly little is known about the reasons why customers remain loyal to a particular energy supplier or why they switch suppliers. Energy suppliers need information on target group satisfaction and associated switching tendencies as well as customer willingness to switch utility providers. Most existing studies limit themselves to the quantitative determination of customers willing to switch.

In light of previous research that has demonstrated a link between customer satisfaction and outcome variables such as customer loyalty and recommendation behavior (e.g., Mooradian and Olver 1997), the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between customer satisfaction and switching intentions as well as to identify switching segments. In particular, the objectives of the paper were (a) to measure the satisfaction level of private energy customers with their current energy suppliers and customer intention to switch providers, (b) to analyze the strength of the satisfaction-switching relationship, (c) to analyze the motivation of customers to either switch energy suppliers or stay with their current supplier, (d) to identify various switching types that differ with regard to their motivation for switching energy suppliers, and (e) to discuss the marketing implications of the investigation.

We particularly focused on the German market for a number of reasons. Most importantly, German consumers have been reluctant to exercise choice and few private electricity customers wish to switch energy suppliers. But despite low switching rates, there is currently an enormous expenditure by German energy supply companies on CRM concepts, which aim at retaining existing and attracting new customers (Krafft et al. 2002). Furthermore, in comparison to companies in other sectors, German energy supply companies exhibit deficits with regard to customer satisfaction and corporate reputation (e.g., Kundenmonitor Deutschland 2001). Therefore, identifying and understanding the needs of loyal customers and switchers in the German market will be particularly useful in furthering our understanding of the relationships between customer satisfaction and switching behavior.

A total of 462 customers of a large German energy supplier were surveyed regarding their perceptions and future intentions in relation to their energy provider. The questionnaire included measures of customer satisfaction, switching intentions, motivation for switching/non-switching intentions, as well as demographic items. All items included in the current investigation were derived from theoretical considerations regarding possible switching motivation (e.g., Lin, Wu, and Wang 2000). The customer satisfaction scale was developed from a mix of original and adapted scale items derived from previous studies (e.g., Hennig-Thurau et al. 2002) and consisted of eight items. Switching and non-switching motives were measured with eight items each. Exploratory as well as confirmatory factor analyses were used to assess the reliability of

all measures. Factor analyses identified two motivational factors of non-switchers (*Satisfaction/Lack of trust in other providers* and *Wait and see*) as well as two motivational factors for switchers (*General dissatisfaction/Relationship fatigue* and *Monetary-motivated curiosity*). Depending on respondents' reported intentions to switch or not to switch, they only answered the questions relevant to their intentions. In particular, those customers who had definite switching intentions were examined more closely. In the analysis, the total sample was divided into subgroups of switchers (n=139) and non-switchers (n=323) and then motives were analyzed with regard to their switching tendency.

Results using regression analysis show that customer satisfaction had a significant effect on switching intentions. As expected, those customers who were more satisfied reported lower intentions to switch energy suppliers. In addition, cluster analysis was used to more closely examine switchers. Three unique clusters were identified. The first cluster, *Dissatisfied customers*, consists of primarily older, low-income customers who are particularly dissatisfied but who place little relevance on monetary incentives. The second cluster, *Relatively satisfied customers seeking change*, consists of customers who place relatively high value on monetary-oriented curiosity but less value on dissatisfaction/relationship fatigue. The third cluster, *Dissatisfied customers seeking change*, consists of primarily young, salaried employees and civil servants for whom both motives, dissatisfaction/relationship fatigue and monetary-oriented curiosity are equally important.

Results of this study are discussed in light of its theoretical as well as practical implications. In particular, we discuss the relevance of our findings regarding the relationship marketing literature as well as prior research on the customer satisfaction—customer loyalty relationship (e.g., Jones and Sasser 1995). Furthermore, directions for future research are identified.

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Brand Extension Evaluations: Effects of Affective Commitment, Involvement, Price Consciousness and Preference for Bundling in the Extension Category

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ABSTRACT

Recent brand extension research has mainly focused on the judgmental effects of similarity between the established brand and the brand extension. This paper extends this research by investigating the effects of characteristics in the extension category. The results suggest that (a) affective commitment towards the incumbent brand in the extension category is negatively related to the intention to purchase the extension, and (b) involvement with the entry category increases purchase intention. Furthermore, price consciousness has a positive effect on preference for product bundling, while similarity and preference for bundling positively influences the intention to buy a brand extension. The results underscore the importance of extension category characteristics for consumer evaluation of extensions.

INTRODUCTION

As managers begin to more fully appreciate the advantages of introducing new products under existing brand names, the number of brand extensions has increased to a point where it now represents between 40% and 80% of all new products (Kanner 1989). In order to capitalize on a brand's equity, managers are likely to continue introducing new extensions into the market (Barone, Miniard and Romeo 2000). Although managers have a multitude of decisions to make regarding the appropriate marketing mix for their products brand extension managers have only two primary questions to consider: (1) which category to enter and (2) what characterizes the extension category.

Most research has concluded that increased perceived similarity between the parent brand and extension categories leads to more positive evaluations of the brand extensions (e.g., Aaker and Keller, 1990; Boush et al. 1987; Keller and Sood, 2003/4). Although the concept of similarity has been expanded to include the understanding of its antecedents and the role of brand characteristics such as breadth (Boush and Loken 1991), knowledge and particular associations (Broniarczyk and Alba 1994), the focus has remained on the attitude implications of brand-category similarity. Only a limited amount of research has gone beyond the brand-category similarity paradigm, and no more than a few studies have begun to explore the implications of consumer perception of the extension category (Kardes and Allen 1991; Jun, Mazumbar and Raj 1999; Smith and Park 1992). Smith and Park (1992) investigated the effects of the number of competitors present in the extension category, but no effect was found on the evaluation of the extensions. Furthermore, Kardes and Allen (1991) found that brand extensions tend to be rated as more favorable in low perceived quality variability conditions in the extension category than in high-perceived conditions. Finally, Jun et al. (1999) found that high tech brands are judged more positively if there is greater variation in quality among the current brands in the extension category.

The purpose of this research is to explore the effects of different characteristics of the extension category on the evaluation

of brand extensions. Based on the literature, it is suggested that at least five types of category characteristics influence the evaluation of brand extensions: (a) bundling, (b) price consciousness, (c) affective commitment, (d) involvement, and (e) perceived knowledge of the extension category. It is also hypothesized—as in past research—that similarity has a positive effect on brand extension evaluations. Data from a survey involving an established car brand extended to a service product-category was used to test the relationships. The paper closes with a discussion of the results, and insights on limitations and future research are offered.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The primary purpose of this study is to determine empirically the extent to which the extension category characteristics affect the evaluation of brand extensions. The following discussion provides a rationale for the research hypotheses.

Perceived Similarity

Referent product–extension product similarity (hereafter referred to as similarity) is the degree to which consumers perceive the extensions as similar to other products affiliated with the brand (Smith and Park 1992). The most frequently considered antecedent of brand extensions is the level of perceived similarity between the original and extended brand. Several studies reported that the greater the similarity between the original and extended category, the greater the transfer of positive (or negative) affect to the extended brand (cf.; Aaker and Keller 1990; Boush et al. 1987; Keller and Sood 2003/4). This finding is based on the assumption that consumers will develop more favorable attitudes towards extensions if they perceive high congruence between the extension and the original brand (see Boush et al. 1987 for theoretical discussion). One important reason to include similarity in this study is to test the effects in a “real situation with real consumers”. Second, as similarity has been found to be a major determinant of brand extension evaluations, it is important to include this concept in the model to avoid spurious effects due to lack of an important variable. Therefore, the hypothesis that:

- H₁: The higher the perceived similarity between the brand extension and the parent brand, the higher the intention to purchase the extension.

Bundling

The bundling of products is a competitive instrument extensively used by marketers. For example, sport shops will often offer a package of both skis and ski boots at a single price, in addition to selling the items separately. Such a strategy, called *price bundling* (Soman and Gourville 2001), offers the customers a discount on both the skis and the boots when bought in a package compared to buying them separately. The advantage for the customer is a lower price; while the benefit for the shop is that the customers buy both products from the same shop instead of buying skis in one store and ski boots in another. While price bundling is valuable due to the discounted price, *product bundling* implies increased customer value due to the integral architecture of the bundle (Ulrich and Eppinger 1995). One important motive that makes product bundling appeal to consumers is the convenience of buying separate

¹The authors would like to thank Petter Moe, Andreas Nilsen and Niklas Sponheim for their invaluable help in collecting the data. The authors are listed at random and contributed equally to this paper.

products or services from one single supplier, thus limiting the number of interaction points. Stremersch and Tellis (2002), argue that the term “separate products” is important when defining the notion of bundling. According to their definition, *separate products* imply that the bundle consists of products for which *separate markets* exist, because at least some customers want to buy the products separately. According to Stremersch and Tellis’ (2002) framework of bundling strategies, price and product bundles can be divided into three categories—*unbundling*, *bundling* and *mixed bundling*. While an extensive elaboration of this 2x3 classification schema is outside the boundaries of this paper, the distinction between pure bundling and mixed bundling merits comment. A *pure* product bundle is a package of products that can be bought only in the bundle, and not separately. In contrast, *mixed* product bundling means that consumers can choose to buy the products separately or in a bundle. The latter kind of product bundling is the center of attention in this study, for several reasons. First, this is a study of a brand extension in which a firm that offers a physical, high involvement product extends into a lower involvement service category. This implies that the products/services bundled confirm to *separate products* for which *separate markets* exist. Second, while a pure bundling of products would imply that the products could only be bought in a package, this is a study of a situation where the parent brand can easily be bought without buying the extension, and vice versa. This is also the case for most brand extensions.

While the previous paragraphs illustrate the concept of mixed product bundling, the focal concept in this study is consumer preference for such bundling opportunities, more specifically the effect this has on the intention to purchase the brand extension (see Aaker and Keller 1990, p. 30). There should be several reasons why a preference for product bundling would increase the intention to purchase the brand extension. First, a major motivation to buy a product bundle is convenience (Stremersch and Tellis 2002). Second, bundling an existing product with a brand extension involves assembling a combination of products not previously offered in the market. As such, the bundle itself is new to the consumer. Recall that the success of brand extensions is largely based on the transfer of associations for a product in one category to a new product offered in a separate category. If the parent brand is one associated with affect and liking, the brand extension should benefit from being bundled with the parent brand due to the benefits of bundling alone, but also receive a benefit due to the transfer of affect from the parent brand to the bundle. Thus, the proposition that:

H_{2a}: The consumers’ preference for bundling will positively influence the intention to purchase the brand extension

The arguments outlining H_{2a} might be further advanced to advocate that the similarity between the parent brand and the extension would influence the consumers’ preference for product bundling. Again this study draws on the transfer of liking and affect from one category to another as a basis for brand extensions. Recall that this transfer is more likely to be found under conditions of high similarity (Aaker and Keller 1990). If the consumers evaluate the parent brand as being of high value, and have already developed positive feelings for this brand, the perceived value of a bundle consisting of two products carrying this particular brand is likely to be higher than a bundle consisting of the parent brand and another brand. Hence, due to a pure value perception argument based on the beliefs held about the parent brand, and the transfer of these beliefs to the bundle, consumers are more likely to prefer bundling under conditions of high similarity. Accordingly, the next hypothesis suggests that:

H_{2b}: The consumers’ preference for bundling will be positively influenced by the perceived similarity between the parent brand and the brand extension

Price Consciousness

The next research question suggests that the consumers’ inherent level of price consciousness will have an effect on the preference for bundling. In accordance with Lichtenstein, Ridgway and Netemeyer (1993), the conception of price consciousness is *the degree to which consumers focus exclusively on paying low prices*. Recall that a price reduction resulting from a bundling of products is defined as a *price bundle* (Stremersch and Tellis 2002), while the focus of this study is a mixed product bundle. Thus, there should intuitively not be any reason to believe that price consciousness would be related to a preference for this particular kind of bundle. However, for most consumers this theoretical distinction between price and product bundles is only an abstract phenomenon. More likely, consumers possess an experience-based assumption related to the bundling of products that suggests bundling is generally beneficial (Estelami 1999) due to reasons such as: 1) higher convenience, 2) reduced risk, e.g. through familiar brands, 3) lower prices, 4) fewer suppliers to visit and confront in case of product failure, etc. Previous research indicates that the economic savings from bundling is often really substantial, but cases of pure loss due to bundling also exist (see Estelami 1999). However, most consumers assume that bundling is a way of saving money. This implies that for consumers who are concerned about price, bundles should generally be fairly attractive. Hence, the posit that:

H₃: Price consciousness has a positive effect on the consumers’ preference for product bundling

Affective Commitment

The notion of commitment has been an important aspect of studies on customer relationships over the last decades (e.g., Gundlach, Achrol and Mentzer 1995). While the literature on commitment generally suggests that the phenomenon exists in different forms (Allen and Meyer 1990), most research has found the affective kind of commitment to be a major determinant of customer loyalty, while the effects of other types of commitment are more unclear (see Kumar, Hibbard and Stern (1994) for a marketing related study including all three forms discussed in the literature). Affective commitment is based on emotions and affective attachments to the commitment object (Porter et al. 1974), and thus, it is grounded on customer partiality and positive feelings for the relationship partner. If a customer’s affective commitment to a brand is high, this should bring about a wish and motivation to continue the relationship. Since this type of commitment does not include any instrumental cost-benefit evaluations, it is derived from the emotional pleasure associated with the relationship partner, and the feelings of fondness developed within the relationship. As such, affective committed parties are inclined to maintain the existing relationship, an assumption extensively supported by previous research (Kumar et al. 1994; Wieselquist et al. 1999). This study argues that consumers whose affective commitment to a supplier is high will be less receptive to a newly introduced product in this category. Regarding the brand extension, this implies that the intention to buy a new product will be lower the higher the level of commitment to an incumbent brand. Accordingly, the hypothesis that:

H₄: Affective commitment to a brand in the extension category will negatively influence the intention to purchase the brand extension.

Involvement

Research on consumer involvement goes back to Sherif and Cantril's (1947) early work. The current view in consumer behavior holds involvement to be a causal or motivating variable influencing the consumer's purchase and communication behavior. Involvement is defined as: "A person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests" (Antil 1984, p. 204; Zaichkowsky 1985, p. 342). Involvement is considered an individual difference variable (Laurent and Kapferer 1985), and the comprehensiveness of both purchase decision processes and the processing of communications will vary significantly depending on consumer level of involvement.

The relationship between involvement with the extension category and brand extension evaluation is based on the fact that response differences between highly involved and less involved consumers reflect, to some extent, differences in risk-taking propensity. Highly involved consumers tend to be less risk averse than other consumers. Following from this, a common observation is that individuals high in perceived involvement are more venture-some and more willing to try new brands (e.g., Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1992). Moreover, the level of involvement enables the consumer to pick up news on additional brands in the category faster than less involved consumers. Hence, the familiarity argument and the risk prone argument are given as reasons to advocate that involved consumers will be more inclined to purchase a brand extension than less involved consumers. Thus, the fifth hypothesis suggests:

H₅: The consumers' involvement in the extension category will positively influence the intention to purchase the brand extension.

Knowledge

There has been a substantial amount of research on personal effects on decision-making in different contexts (see Brucks 1985; Hoch and Ha 1986). In this research, there is an introduction of consumer knowledge of the extension product class as an antecedent to intention to purchase. A rich amount of literature on knowledge in consumer research generally predicts that non-experts are more prone to be influenced by contextual variables than experts (e.g., Rao and Monroe 1988). It is often assumed that experts are more confident in their judgments and thus less susceptible to contextual cues. Drawing on differences in the amount of chronically accessible information as well as different cognitive processes, there would also be a prediction of smaller context effects for experts than for non-experts. Compared to non-experts, experts characteristically possess a rich and well-organized knowledge structure for the specific domain (e.g., Alba and Hutchinson 1987). This plentiful and orderly knowledge structure makes it easier for experts to find connections (matches) between different core brands and extensions. On the other hand for non-experts, only a small amount of information is chronically accessible. Based on these assumed differences in the amount of chronically accessible information, the prediction is that experts are more likely than novices to identify similarities between parent brands and brand extensions. Therefore:

H₆: Knowledge of the extension product category will positively influence the intention to buy the brand extension.

The conceptual model is presented in Figure 1 and portrays the hypotheses in this paper.

METHODOLOGY

The data used to test the theoretical model was collected by means of a survey mailed to 900 respondents. These were randomly drawn from the customer database of a national importer of cars produced by a global manufacturer. Stated differently, all customers throughout the country who had purchased a car of this brand from a brand dealer had the possibility of being included in the sample. The reason this car brand was chosen as the research context was the plan to introduce a brand specific insurance service directed at owners of this car brand (a brand extension). The insurance was intended to be sold only at the car dealers that sold the parent brand, and the insurance would also be labeled with the car brand (to exemplify: BMW Insurance only sold at BMW dealers). This was also found to be an adequate context, as the brand in question is generally perceived as a high quality brand (see Aaker and Keller, 1990, p. 31 for a discussion). Furthermore, the ability to study an original brand not previously extended broadly was positive since previous research has found that the breadth of an established brand has an influence on how brand information is processed, as well as on the evaluation of brand extensions (Kardes and Allen 1991; Keller and Aaker 1992). Of the sample of 900, a total of 255 respondents participated in the study, which corresponds to a response rate of 28.33%. Analyzing late response data did not indicate any non-response bias (Armstrong and Overton 1977).

Measures

The *dependent variable* was the intention to buy the brand extension. In the literature on brand extensions, consumer response to brand extensions has most frequently been operationalized using attitudinal measures, typically some form of overall evaluation of the proposed extensions (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). For example, Keller and Aaker (1992) used the statement "Overall, I am very positive to extension 1" anchored by "totally disagree" and "totally agree" (see also Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; Keller and Sood 2003/04). This measurement practice was followed using a similar single item measure, although the focus was on purchase intentions.

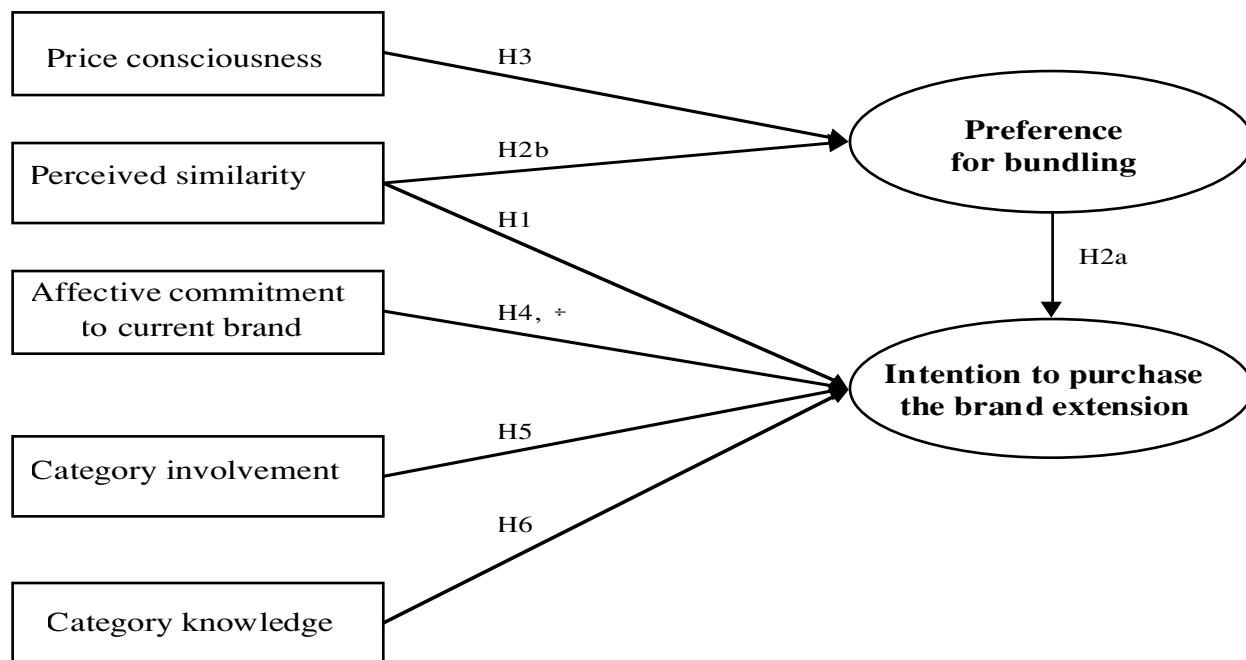
Among the *independent variables*, three items measured perceived similarity between the original brand and the extension. Two of the items were based on Smith and Park (1992), and the third item was based on Aaker and Keller (1990). The two items measuring preference for bundling were self-constructed based on definitions offered by extant literature (e.g., Estelami 1999; Stremersch and Tellis 2002), while the four items capturing the customer price consciousness were adapted from Lichtenstein et al. (1993). The three items capturing affective commitment to the incumbent brand in the extension category were adapted from Allen and Meyer (1990), while the category involvement construct was measured with four items adapted from Zaichkowsky (1985) and Laurent and Kapferer (1985). The three measures for category knowledge were based on Park et al. (1994). All constructs were measured with 7-point Likert type scales, anchored by "totally disagree" (1) and "totally agree" (7).

The quest for face validity was a two-stage process, with 3 marketing professors initially reviewing the items. After a revision based on their comments, 20 consumers were asked to answer the questionnaire and comment on anything that was felt to be ambiguous or in other ways not totally understandable. Some minor changes in the wording were made after this procedure.

Construct Measurement Model

The measurement model was tested by use of the structural equation modeling technique in LISREL 8.52. To test only the

FIGURE 1
Conceptual Model



specified relations between indicators and latent variables, all constructs was treated as exogenous (Andersen and Gerbing 1988). Throughout this procedure, the single item for intention to purchase the brand extension was given a fixed error term of 0.19. Single item scales are fixed in LISREL, and adding an error term ensures a stronger and more realistic model test (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). The initial tests suggested a total of 5 items for removal to meet the requirements of unidimensional measures. The re-specified model received a satisfactory fit with a Chi square value equal to 106,97 with 70 degrees of freedom ($p=0.00$). Other fit indices were a RMSEA of 0.045, a NNFI of 0.95 and a CFI equal to 0.97. These test measures all met the requirements of a well fitting model (e.g. Browne and Cudeck 1993).

The reliability of the scales was assessed using three measures proposed by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). First, item reliability was computed as $\rho_i = \frac{\sum \lambda_i^2 \text{var}T}{(\sum \lambda_i^2 \text{var}T + \theta_{ii})}$, where T is the construct reflected by the item. Second, the average variance extracted for each construct was defined as $\rho_v = \frac{\lambda_i^2 \text{var}T}{(\sum \lambda_i^2 \text{var}T + \theta_{ii})}$. Both the item reliability and average variance extracted scores should preferably exceed 0.5. Finally, the composite reliability was assessed by the formula $\rho_c = \frac{(\sum \lambda_i)^2 \text{var}T}{(\sum \lambda_i)^2 \text{var}T + \sum \theta_{ii}}$. Composite reliability should exceed 0.6 to be satisfactory (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). The reliability measures were generally satisfactory, although with exceptions on some scores. However, as an important aspect of measurement is to capture all facets of the construct (Bollen and Lennox 1991), all the measures were retained in the final measurement model to maintain the theoretical domain of the variables. This decision was also based on the fact that lack of reliability is accounted for in structural equation models (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1982).

The final test of the measurement model was directed at discriminant validity, which can be claimed to be present if no single pair of variables are perfectly correlated within the range of random error (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). According to the

correlation matrix, none of the correlations came close to 111 when adjusted for ± 2 standard deviations.

Structural Model

Test scores for the structural model are reported in Table 1. With a Chi-square of 110.94 (d.f.=74, $p=0.00$), a RMSEA of 0.044, a NNFI value of 0.95 and a CFI of 0.97, the statistics of fit indicated that the model satisfactorily reproduced the covariance matrix. As can be seen from Table 1, *perceived similarity* was found to positively influence both the *intention to purchase the brand extension* ($\gamma=0.30$, $t=3.55$), and the *preference for bundling* ($\gamma=0.38$, $t=4.67$), lending support to H_1 and H_{2a} , respectively. Furthermore, *preference for bundling* was assumed to positively influence *intention to purchase the brand extension* (H_{2b}). This hypothesis was supported, with test values equal to $\beta=0.36$ ($t=4.30$). In hypothesis 3 it was suggested that *price consciousness* has a positive effect on *preference for bundling*, and this hypothesis was supported ($\gamma=0.18$, $t=2.64$). Table 1 shows that H_4 , outlining the negative effect of *affective commitment to the current brand* on the *intention to purchase the brand extension*, was supported by the data ($\gamma=-0.26$, $t=-3.46$). Furthermore, it was proposed that the *intention to purchase the brand extension* would be positively influenced by *category involvement* (H_5). This hypothesis was supported, with test values equal to $\gamma=0.20$ ($t=2.34$). Finally, hypothesis 6 suggested that *category knowledge* would positively affect the *intention to purchase the brand extension*, but this hypothesis was not supported ($\gamma=0.11$, $t=1.41$). The squared multiple correlations showed that the model explains 17 % of the variance in the *preference for bundling*, and 48 % of the variance in the *intention to purchase the brand extension*.

DISCUSSION

Past research on brand extensions has traditionally focused on perceived similarities between parent brands and extensions and

TABLE 1
Parameter Estimates and Fit Measures for the Structural Model

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Path</i>	<i>Estimate</i>
H ₁	Perceived similarity ⇒ Intention to purchase brand extension	0.30**
H _{2a}	Preference for bundling ⇒ Intention to purchase brand extension	0.36**
H _{2b}	Perceived similarity ⇒ Preference for bundling	0.38**
H ₃	Price consciousness ⇒ Preference for bundling	0.18**
H ₄	Affective commitment to current brand ⇒ Intention to purchase brand extension	-0.26**
H ₅	Category involvement ⇒ Intention to purchase brand extension	0.20*
H ₆	Category knowledge ⇒ Intention to purchase brand extension	n.s
<i>Squared Multiple Correlations</i>		
	Bundling	0.17
	Intention to purchase brand extension	0.48
$\chi^2(74)=110.94$ ($p=0.00$); RMSEA=0.044; NNFI=0.95; CFI=0.97		

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; $n=255$

has examined the effects of these factors on evaluations of brand extensions. In this article the focus was on another important dimension, the effects of characteristics of the extension category on consumer evaluations of brand extensions.

The findings suggest that the degree to which consumers are emotionally attached to their currently chosen brand in the extension category might be a barrier to a competitor's successful entry. Several implications arise from this assertion. First, marketers who plan to extend their brand into a new category should *ex ante* analyze the level and diversity of incumbent brand commitment and loyalty held by target consumers. Second, the loyalty literature suggests that apparently loyal behavior might not be due to loyalty at all, but might instead be repurchase patterns stemming from habits, convenience, exit barriers and the like (Bloemer and Kasper 1995). Hence, repurchase pattern is not an adequate measure of how protected by consumer loyalty the existing brands are in the extension category, a fact the extending brand managers should take into account when designing an entry strategy for the brand extension. This conclusion might be drawn from the results of this study with regard to bundling.

As discussed earlier, bundling refers to two or more products sold in a package, and specifically the preference for a mixed bundle of products was studied. As expected, the consumers' preference for bundling increases the intention to buy the brand extension. It is probable that parent brands might use a bundling strategy to recruit customers who possess this preference, given that the parent brand and the extension make a logical bundle. The strength of the parameter estimates in this model suggests that the positive influence of preference for bundling is stronger than the negative effect of commitment to current brand, which further implies that bundling is a favorable strategy. This fact, combined with the strong impact of perceived similarity on the preference for bundling, suggests that the similarity route to extension success should not be underrated. Stated differently, the single most dominating success factor related to brand extensions has been found to be perceived similarity (e.g., Aaker and Keller 1990), and it can be argued that similarity has an additional positive effect through its impact on consumer preference for product bundles.

In accordance with the hypothesis, price consciousness seems to influence the consumers' preference for a mixed bundle of products. This implies that 1) there are some consumers who will find bundles very attractive due only to an inherent personality trait, and 2) firms might tailor their advertising campaigns in such a way that the economic virtue of the bundle would be signaled to these consumers. Stated differently, due to variation in this personality trait, marketers might gain extra sales by making sure that customers with high price consciousness are made aware of the bundling option.

It was found in this research that involvement in the extension category affects the intention to buy a brand extension in a positive way. Therefore, marketers should also consider the level of involvement held by consumers in the target segment for a brand extension. When planning to expand into a new product category the competent firm will do its utmost to assess and profile relevant target groups. Standard insight reveals that potential consumers who are involved in and who have a perceived need for the actual product are more likely to buy the extended brand.

Knowledgeable subjects did not have a higher intention to buy a brand extension compared to novices. This finding does not support the arguments that knowledgeable consumers with a rich and well-organized knowledge structure are better at finding similarity between core brands and extensions. Wänke, Bless and Schwartz (1998) argued that this rich and well-organized knowledge structure also makes it easier for experts to find mismatches between different core brands and extensions. The inconsistent results on this issue could imply that perceived knowledge could have both a positive and a negative effect on the intention to buy a brand extension, contingent on the context. Future research should address this issue.

Conclusions and Further Research

These findings not only contribute to the growing body of knowledge in the area of brand extension, but also suggest several specific issues that warrant further inquiry. First, the inclusion of the construct of commitment in further studies on brand extensions could produce interesting results. One basic assumption in the

literature is that extensions of well-known and well-liked original brands are advantageous due to transfer of positive affect to the extension. However, it has been pointed out in this study that even a very strong parent brand may find an extension difficult because consumers have an established relationship to a brand in the extension category. Hence, one possible avenue for further studies would be to investigate the different strategies the extending brand could apply to break consumers' relationships to incumbent brands.

Second, other characteristics of the extension category should be investigated in relation to the evaluation of brand extensions. One option would be to study the effects of dominance. This characteristic could be used to explore the effects of brand extensions on categories with stronger dominating brands versus weaker dominating brands (Laurent, Kapferer and Roussel 1995, p. G178). A third issue for future research would be how a brand extension affects the positions of the original brands in the categories? How do the original brands react to the new (extension) competitor? An interesting avenue for research would be to examine the dynamic processes that the extension undergoes within the extension category.

To conclude, this investigation has produced some interesting contributions to the literature on brand extensions. First, extending a brand into a category where consumers are highly committed to existing brands seems to be more challenging than expected. Thus, other options might prove more fruitful. Second, if the parent brand and the extension can form a natural bundle, a mixed bundle strategy seems to attract both customers with a general preference for such bundles, and also more price conscious consumers. Third, involvement in the extension category was found to effect the intention to buy a brand extension in a positive way, which implies that marketing activities might be successfully directed to the outlets where high involvement consumers are most easily found. Finally, in line with previous research, it was found that similarity had a positive effect on the intention to buy a brand extension. However, extending previous research, it was found that this similarity also increased the consumers' preference for a product bundle, which in turn was positively related to purchase intentions. As such a new basis has been established on which to advocate the importance of similarity. Accordingly, as some categories are more receptive to brand extensions than others, one should carefully consider which to choose. This article offers some guidelines.

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A Consumer Preference Formation Perspective on Pioneering Advantage in Electronic Marketplace

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ABSTRACT

In physical markets, the pioneer or first-mover often enjoys large market share because of its early entry. This large share is often a result of high entry barriers for late entrants and high switching costs for consumers. In electronic markets, however, switching costs across online retailers are relatively lower and entry barriers are minimal. This paper extends the stream of competitive advantage research to e-commerce settings. Specifically, it conceptualizes and assesses the pioneering advantage of online retailers from the perspective of consumer preference formation. Several propositions were developed for future empirical testing.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, e-commerce has reshaped the landscape of competitive advantage among companies (Evans and Wurster 1999). It transforms the way companies conduct their business and electronic merchants gradually grab a significant market share from competitors in the physical market. To gain an edge in this new economy, there is no time to analyze and plan. Given the speed of change, being first is often enough to create an advantage (Kardes and Gurumurthy 1992; Downes and Mui 1999). For example, Amazon.com was able to obtain first-mover advantage when it was established in 1995 with "a mission to use the Internet to transform book buying into the fastest, easiest and most enjoyable shopping experience possible" (Amazon.com). Its founder Jeff Bezos gave a great deal of thought in the selection of an initial category. He wanted a category for his e-tailing venture such that even the biggest, best-endowed physical competitor would be at a disadvantage. As the first commercial web site, the venture was novel, attracting attention of large number of Web surfers. In fact, its major rival—Barnes and Noble took a while to recognize the emerging threat of Amazon and to develop a strategy to combat the strength of its new competitor. BN.com is now counted as one of the top ten most visited sites in the U.S. in 1999 (Economist 1999).

Whether the success of Amazon was a result of pioneering advantage, or whether it was due to its technological innovation, is an important research question. The existence of inherent first-mover advantage and competitive advantage has been documented in the literature (Robinson 1988; Robinson and Fornell 1985). In physical markets, market pioneer or first-mover often enjoys enduring high market share advantage because of its early entry. This large share results from creation of high entry barriers for late entrants and high switching costs for consumers. In electronic markets, however, consumers' costs of switching among online retailers are relatively low and entry barriers for new players are minimal (Auger and Gallagher 1997; Klein 1998). The choice of being a first mover or an early follower is a critical one for managers, yet available research or practice-based evidence provides little guidance. It is not clear that a market characterized with lower switching costs and entry barriers will guarantee that first-to-market firms like Amazon will still be dominant as the market evolves (Coltman et. al 2000).

Given the lower entry barriers in electronic markets, pioneering efforts may ultimately prove to be of limited value. Provided high customer switching costs do not exist, the follower-entrants are often well positioned to exploit their existing strategic resources base and core competencies. Question such as how companies could retain competitive advantage becomes an important issue.

Does timing of entry in electronic market affect companies' competitive advantage? If first-mover advantage exists in electronic markets, how can it be explained and analyzed? What are the mechanisms affecting consumers' decision-making process in which companies could gain competitive advantage in e-commerce? These are only a few but important questions to be addressed.

In addition to radically transforming the business climate, e-commerce provides consumers more shopping and media options. It has been suggested that online consumers are empowered because the Internet allows them to compare prices, products, and services across a wide variety of stores in a matter of minutes (Abbott et. al 1999; Sheth and Sisodia 1997). In all markets, attracting and retaining customers has become an important issue. We argue that in electronic markets, customer attraction and retention are even more crucial than in physical markets. Online marketers will be able to sustain their competitive advantage by shifting consumers' preference, leading to a higher repeat visits and market share. In addressing these issues, previous literature in the stream of consumer preference formation assessing competitive advantage could provide some guidance (Carpenter and Nakamoto 1989; Senguta 1995; Hintzman 1986), provided it can be reinterpreted in the context of electronic marketplaces.

The objective of this paper is to extend the stream of competitive advantage research to e-commerce settings. Specifically, the goals of the paper are to conceptualize and assess the pioneering advantage construct in e-markets from the perspective of consumer preference formation. Rather than tackle the whole field of e-commerce strategy, the paper limits its focus to online retailers.

Before any further discussion, a few observations need to be made regarding the scope of this study. First, given the complex market structure of the retail sector, shifts in consumer preference among retailers could occur at various levels—(1) overall shift from physical market to online market, (2) shift from buying through physical retailers to online retailers to online market, (3) shift from physical retailers to a particular online retailer, (4) shift from competitive online retailer to another retailer (Dholakia et. al 2000). For example, consumers may prefer physical retailers on the whole over online retailers or vice versa. Similarly, they may choose online retailers over physical retailers for specific product categories. Since the focus of this paper is on electronic markets, the level will be on the overall preference of consumers for online retailers vs. physical retailers.

Second, as Carpenter and Nakamoto (1989) argue, the consumer learning process produces a competitive advantage apart from influencing consumer's ideal combination of attributes. In physical markets, the pioneer can thus become strongly associated with the product category as a whole and, consequently, become the "standard" against which later entrants are judged. The emergence of electronic markets, however, may blur the notion of pioneer in the category. For instance, it is possible in the book industry that Barnes and Noble is the "standard" in the category against which e-pioneer Amazon is judged in the consumer learning process. At the same time, Amazon could be the standard in electronic markets against which BN.com (the electronic unit of Barnes and Noble) is judged. To solve this problem, we argue that the use of such a referent standard depends on the length and depth of consumers' online shopping experience.

Third, as e-commerce enters a new phase, established firms—particularly branded goods suppliers and physical retailers—are slowly beginning to get involved (Evans and Wurster 1999). This will shift attention from growth strategies adopted by first movers (i.e., Amazon and E*Trade) to strategies that deliver sustainable competitive advantage for more traditional firms (Coltman et. al 2000). It is not clear, however, whether established brick-and-mortar retailers (e.g., Barnes and Noble and Wal-Mart) would automatically gain competitive advantages in the electronic markets. Therefore, two types of online retailers are considered in this paper—pure-play online retailers and brick-and-click retailers (online retailers with physical presence). Because physical presence is one of online store attributes influencing consumers' satisfaction with (Abbott et. al 1999) and preference for online retailers, it will serve as a marker of distinction among online retailers.

Lastly, as mentioned earlier, the focus of this paper is on the retailer level. The stream of past studies has assessed competitive advantage at a product level in the physical market. In electronic markets, however, it is the cyberbrands (e.g., Yahoo.com, Amazon.com) that are prominent. For example, Barwise (1997) suggests that in a busy, over-communicated, and untrustworthy world, consumers continue to gravitate towards brands as a way to simplify choices. In a recent survey on e-commerce, Ernst & Young found that 69 percent of respondents stated that brand name plays a significant role in their online buying decisions (Ernst & Young 1999). Thus, conceptually it seems justified to examine pioneering advantage at the level of online retailer brands.

The paper is organized as follows. First, we begin with a review of relevant literature of consumer preference formation in the domain of pioneering advantage. Based on this review, propositions are developed regarding consumer preference for pioneers and late entrants among online retailers. Finally, we conclude with potential implications of this research.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In the literature, pioneering advantage can be analyzed within the framework of consumer learning mechanisms. Two streams of research are relevant. The first one is based on the idea of a "prototype model" (Schmalensee 1982; Carpenter and Nakamoto 1989; Kardes and Gurumurthy 1992), wherein pioneers are perceived as being "prototypical" of the schema in a product category, thus giving them a sustainable competitive advantage. The second stream is based on the notion of an "exemplar model" (Hintzman 1985; Sengupta 1995) which provides an alternate learning process of consumers. Rather than comparing with a single prototype, consumers categorize a new product by assessing whether it resembles many of the remembered exemplars from a category. Thus, according to this model, not one but a number of instances of a category can be highly salient perceptually and distinct in memory.

Prototype Model

Schmalensee (1982) has suggested that consumers are initially skeptical about the quality of any brand that enters the market. Yet, when consumers become convinced that the first entrant in the product category is satisfactory, the early entrant acts as the standard of comparison by which later entrants are judged. It is for this reason that it becomes difficult for followers to persuade consumers to learn about their late-entering alternative brands.

Kardes and Gurumurthy (1992) have described this order-of-entry effect as differential learning. For instance, consumers often find the pioneer to be novel and attention drawing while its followers appear to be redundant in comparison. The novelty of the pioneer promotes learning about its features, while the redundancy of the followers' attributes inhibits learning concerning their quali-

ties. Consequently, consumers tend to learn and remember more about the pioneer and will thus develop more favorable evaluations toward the pioneer.

Consistent with learning theory in general, Carpenter and Nakamoto (1986) argued that the process by which consumers learn about brands and form preferences for them has an important role in creating an advantage for pioneers, and that this process has two components. First, in the early stages of many markets, consumers may know little about the importance of the product attributes or their ideal combination. Thus, a successful early entrant can have a major influence on how attributes are valued and on the ideal attribute combination. Amazon, for example, may have had a significant impact in its early years on the formation and evolution of individuals' preferences for buying books online. This influence can shift individuals' preferences to favor the pioneer over later entrants, leading to a market share advantage for the pioneer. In essence, following successful experiences with a pioneering brand, buyers come to perceive the combination of attributes possessed by that brand as the ideal combination.

The second component of prototype model is based on the notion that consumers hold schemas for a product category (Sujan 1985). Pioneers are perceived as being "prototypical" of the schema, thus giving them a sustainable competitive advantage. A schema is defined as a memory representation of a particular stimulus domain (Fiske and Taylor 1991). A schema contains information about the category it represents and is often used to categorize a new stimulus. Thus a schema about the category "online bookseller" may contain attributes such as "one-click shopping", "search function" etc., as well as the interrelationship between these attributes. A new online bookseller possessing these typical attributes may be categorized as an "online bookseller", without much effort.

Exemplar Model

As a counterpoint to the prototype perspective, the exemplar approach (e.g. Brooks 1978; Hintzman 1986), suggests that one remembers separate instances (or exemplars) one has actually encountered, rather than some average prototype one has abstracted from experience. In this view, people categorize a new instance by seeing whether it resembles a lot of remembered exemplars from a category, rather than by comparing it with a single prototype. Thus, according to the exemplar view of schemas, a number of instances of a category (not just a single prototypical instance) can be highly salient perceptually and distinct in memory.

In a concise review, Fiske and Taylor (1991), note that the exemplar view has several advantages over the prototype view of schemas in being able to explain a number of schema-related issues with greater ease. The exemplar view most directly accounts for people's knowledge of specific examples that guide their understanding of a category. For example, to refute an assertion that all luxury cars come with power windows, one may retrieve a specific counter-example from the category "luxury cars." This illustration of reliance on concrete instances suggests the idea of exemplars and supports the thesis that an exemplar viewpoint allows for the salience of different category members.

Further, people often know a lot about the possible variation of members within a category. A prototype theory cannot represent information about variability. However, it is easy to describe people's knowledge of such variation by positing exemplars. Again, such knowledge of variability implies that the consumer is in a position to retrieve specific examples of a category.

In sum, a key difference between the prototype model and the exemplar model in the context of the pioneering problem is that the prototype model posits that the schema contains an abstract, global, generalized representation of the category, whereas the exemplar

model suggests that the schema contains differentiated, individual instances of the category. Based on the exemplar model, different members of a category could all be salient, and similarities and differences between these members can easily be perceived.

In explaining pioneering advantage, several moderating variables have been suggested to deepen the explanations regarding the use of prototype or exemplar among consumers. These moderating variables include amount of elaboration and heuristic processing.

Amount of Elaboration and Heuristic Processing

Development of heuristics based on category knowledge saves cognitive effort in decision-making (Alba and Hutchinson 1987; Sherman and Corty 1984). Within the product category, later entry is difficult because consumers tend to know and favor the pioneering brand. They have no reason to experiment with later entering brands. This suggests that consumers may use brand name of the pioneer as a heuristic in decision making under low elaboration conditions (Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann 1983), allowing them to make a sound choice with little cognitive effort. Thus, consumers may compare new brands to the pioneer using holistic or category-based processing, without exerting the effort necessary to process brand information at the attribute level. This argument is in line with prototype model. On the other hand, if consumers make attribute-level brand comparison which requires more cognitive effort, they may know that later entrants have the same attributes as the pioneer and evaluate them similarly. In such cases, the exemplar model may be at work.

This argument suggests that preference asymmetry may be enhanced by category-based processing in which prototype model would be used. On the other hand, if consumers tend to process information at the attribute level, thus employing the exemplar approach, then the pioneer's competitive advantage may be weakened even without differentiation.

PROPOSITIONS

In the electronic environment, consumers learn about the attributes of online retailers and form preferences for them. It has been proposed that online store attributes—which are extensions of physical store attributes—influence consumers' satisfaction and their loyalty to the online store (Abbott et. al 1999). Satisfaction is also likely to determine their preference toward a particular online retailer. Theoretically, the formation of preference could be derived from the two forms discussed—the prototype and the exemplar approach. These two approaches enable us to develop propositions about how the formation of preference could determine competitive advantage in electronic markets. Testing these propositions would reveal whether online retailers could gain competitive advantage by timing their entry to specific e-markets and by emulating specific types of retailers.

Pioneering Advantage in E-markets

Coltman et. al (2000) argue that in an industry dominated by rapid technological innovations, high-risk investments and market uncertainties, pioneering efforts may ultimately prove to be of limited value in a marketplace where barriers to entry are low and the rules of the market are still evolving. Based on this contention, it is worth investigating whether pioneering advantages exists in e-markets in which the pioneers can shift consumers' preferences to favor them over later entrants. Theoretically, the prototype model explains pioneering advantage by suggesting that the pioneer has a unique distinctiveness derived from its being the prototypical representative of the category. In such cases, consumers form a preference structure that favors the pioneer, making it difficult for later entrants to compete away the pioneer's market share. Thus,

along with the arguments made by Carpenter and Nakamoto, we propose that online shoppers will prefer pioneering online retailers than later entrants in the electronic marketplace.

P_1 : Online shoppers' preference is greater for pioneering online retailers than for late entrants.

Who is the Prototype?

The prototype model is based on the notion that consumers hold overall, aggregate schemas for a product category. Pioneers are perceived as being "prototypical" of such schemas, which gives them a sustainable competitive advantage. Since online shopping is a very recent development but many product categories for online shopping are well established, it is not clear which prototype consumers use to make their judgment in e-markets for a given category. For example, it is possible in the book industry that Barnes and Noble is the pioneer and standard in the category against which Amazon is judged in the consumer learning process. At the same time, Amazon could be the pioneer and standard in the e-market in which BN.com is judged. We argue that the use of which prototype (e.g., online vs. bricks-and-mortar) depends on consumers' online shopping experience in their learning process of online shopping.

When dealing with online shopping, most buyers require assurances that the goods are unused, properly identified, and legitimately obtained before they will source them from an unknown supplier (Coltman et. al 2000). It has also been found that security and quality of products are the two main factors preventing consumers from online shopping (Ernst & Young 2000). This suggests that consumers will tend to favor larger, incumbent and well-established retailers because consumers would feel more secure dealing with a known retailer in the new and alien setting of the electronic market. For novice online shoppers, it is likely that they know little about the store attributes or their ideal combination. They are likely to be concerned with security and quality of products. Online retailers with physical stores could provide more security and assurances regarding an easy merchandise return policy. Therefore, the pioneering brick-and-click retailer in the product category will influence novice shoppers' preference and serve as the prototype by which pure-play retailers are judged. In other words, for novice shoppers, the pioneer in the physical market (who has established a relatively early online presence) has more advantages than pure-play online retailers.

For consumers who are experienced with online shopping, satisfactory experiences are likely to reduce their skepticism of online retailers. For such experienced consumers, the pioneering pure-play online retailer will serve as the prototype. Thus, the following propositions are offered.

P_{2a} : For novice online shoppers in a product category, brick-and-click retailers (pioneer in physical market) are likely to serve as the prototype and preferred in the electronic market.

P_{2b} : For experienced online shoppers in a product category, pure-play (pioneer in electronic market) retailers are likely to serve as the prototype and preferred in the electronic market.

Exemplar versus Prototype

Depending on the level of elaboration, the literature suggests that two types of information processing would be used—category-based and attribute-based processing. When category-based processing is utilized, consumers tend to use heuristics—such as their

assessment of the pioneer—to make their decisions. Thus, the pioneer will become the prototype that would make it very difficult for later entrants to gain competitive advantage. On the other hand, attribute-based processing requires higher cognitive effort. In such instances, all brands would be compared. Consequently, pioneering advantage is weakened.

In e-markets, as the innovation of online shopping continues to diffuse, consumers' relative level of knowledge increases over time. Studies have found that increased knowledge regarding the product category produces greater elaboration (Petty and Cacioppo 1986), facilitating an attribute-based processing that would weaken pioneering advantage. As the level of online shopping experience increases, consumers are likely to adopt attribute-based processing rather than category-based processing. Therefore, for novice online shoppers, category-based processing will be employed in which pioneering retailers (in the market as a whole) will be the prototype. Such established retailers would, thus gain a pioneering advantage when novice shoppers turn to online buying. As their level of experience increases, the shoppers will be able to compare online retailers by store attributes. Similarly, for experienced online shoppers, their increased knowledge facilitates attribute-based processing across online retailers. Such processing would weaken any pioneering advantage. This leads us to the following proposition:

P₃: Online shoppers' preference for the pioneer diminishes as their level of online shopping experience increases.

Furthermore, the adoption of exemplar processing would enable consumers to compare a number of online retailers based on their attributes. When online shoppers decide to purchase a product in which they have already experienced online retailers in a product category, their choice will be based on a consideration set that contains either one online retailer (e.g., the pioneer) or more than one online retailer (i.e., the pioneer and later entrants). As their knowledge and experiences increase, it is likely that their consideration sets will include a number of online retailers to which both the pioneer and the late entrants will be compared. Thus, in addition to containing the pioneer, their consideration set may include the followers.

P₄: Online shoppers' consideration set is more likely to contain the followers as their level of online shopping experience increases.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of the propositions presented here are three-fold. First, given the unique characteristics of e-commerce, researchers have questioned whether pioneering advantage exists. Theoretically, the prototype model (Carpenter and Nakamoto 1989) suggests that apart from influencing consumers' ideal combination of attributes, consumers' learning process produces a competitive advantage for the prototypical pioneer. The pioneer can become strongly associated with the product category as a whole and as a result become the standard against which all later entrants are judged. However, there is no empirical evidence suggesting that such formation will yield pioneering advantage in e-markets. Studies based on the first proposition would facilitate an understanding of whether or not online shoppers prefer pioneering online retailer to later entrants.

If the proposition is supported, it can contribute to the stream of research in which pioneer serves as the prototype and has a pioneering advantage. Additionally, support for the first proposition would indicate that the formation of preferences by online

shoppers is based on the existence of prototypes. On the other hand, if the proposition is not verified, key practical implications would ensure. In such a case, it is possible that in e-commerce markets with low entry barriers, fast-moving technology, and rapid and successive innovations, being a pioneer is not necessarily advantageous.

Second, since online shopping is still a relatively new phenomenon and many product categories are already well established in the physical market, it is not clear which prototype online shoppers would use for comparison. In our view, the use of prototype depends on consumers' experience in the length and depth of their learning process about online shopping. There is practical evidence that many established physical retailers are reluctant to enter or late in entering the e-commerce arena. Testing the second proposition could reveal whether brick-and-click retailers could enjoy competitive advantages with novice online shoppers by having established name recognition or tangible physical retail stores as references. For experienced online shoppers—since they are likely to assess online retailers based on online store attributes, simply having a physical presence or being the first in physical market does not provide competitive advantages for the online retailers.

Lastly, two types of information processing could occur as consumers' online shopping experience increases. The increasing knowledge of online shopping could influence consumers' decision and affect pioneering advantage. Specifically, online shoppers' expertise would eventually impact pioneering advantage because attribute-based processing would be adopted, leading to an enlargement of their consideration set for online retailers, including pioneer and later entrants. Therefore, pioneering advantage would be weakened.

CONCLUSION

The notion of pioneering advantage is an intriguing one that has sparked numerous research studies in the fields of marketing, business strategy, and economics. Within these ongoing research streams, the major point of departure of this study is the focus on the pioneering advantage in electronic markets and on online retailer settings. Such settings are different from the focus of the previous literature that has examined pioneering phenomena for branded products in physical markets. Understanding pioneering advantage in e-commerce is an important research area. This paper is only a beginning.

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Normative Versus Comparative Fit: Prototype-based and Exemplar-based Brand Extension Evaluation

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to enrich the conceptualization of “extension fit” in brand extension literature and to explore the information processing underlying extension evaluations. Well documented in brand extension research is the role of “fit” between the core brand and the new product in extension evaluations (e.g. Aaker and Keller 1990). This article questions the unidimensional conceptualization of the fit construct, and proposes two distinctive fits—normative fit (the typicality of the extension to the brand category) and comparative fit (the similarity between the existing product and the new product). Related with either normative or comparative fit, brand extension evaluation can occur as prototype-based (top-down process) or as exemplar-based (parallel process).

Differentiation of the two extension fits is especially crucial in a multiple-product brand scenario, where consumers may develop a brand schema in which they store not only each affiliated product as exemplar but also generalized higher-order brand knowledge as prototype. With prototype-based process, consumers infer the quality of extension products based on the abstracted brand prototype. The evaluation is a top-down deduction process where impression of the new product instance is made based on knowledge of the brand as a group. Normative fit, the typicality of the extension product to the brand category, determines the extent to which the attitude toward the brand be transferred to the new product. Extension evaluation can also occur in an exemplar-based parallel fashion. For extensions that are similar to some existing product, that is when the comparative fit is high, consumers may draw inference from the existing product to the new product, without retrieving any higher-order brand prototype information. While the prototype-based process requires some cognitive resource, the exemplar-based process is more effortless because its inference base and target are of the same level.

Brand extensions are evaluated in two stages: the first stage being exemplar-based and the second stage prototype-based. Comparative fit is necessary to activate the exemplar-based stage one, and normative fit becomes a better predictor for extension evaluation in the prototype-based stage two. Cognitive resource moderates the evaluation process: with little resource the evaluation is mainly exemplar-based; but with increasing resource the prototype-based stage is more thoroughly processed and determines extension evaluation to a larger degree. Hence:

- H1:* With high cognitive resource, high (versus low) normative fit will lead to favorable extension evaluations.
- H2:* With high cognitive resource, high (versus low) comparative fit will lead to favorable extension evaluations.
- H3:* With high cognitive resource, brand extensions with high normative fit but low comparative fit will receive more favorable evaluations than brand extensions with high comparative fit but low normative fit.
- H4:* With low cognitive resource, high (versus low) comparative fit will lead to favorable extension evaluations, regardless of normative fit.

Memory accessibility is predicted to moderate the process (Carlston and Smith 1996). Specifically, consumers who have

well-developed brand prototype are more likely to engage in prototype-based process while those who have direct experience with an existing affiliated product might involve in exemplar-based process. Hence:

- H5a:* Given high comparative fit, high (versus low) accessibility of a product exemplar will lead to favorable extension evaluation.
- H6a:* Given high normative fit, high (versus low) accessibility of brand prototype will lead to favorable extension evaluation.

The experiment was conducted with a 2 (normative fit: high vs. low) x 2 (comparative fit: high vs. low) x 2 (cognitive resource: high vs. low) x 2 (order of the two extension product replicates) between-subject design. Two dependent variables were examined—extension evaluation as an outcome measure and thought protocol as a process measure. Four covariates were included—brand familiarity, brand favorability, need for cognition, and gender.

With ANCOVA and cell mean difference comparisons, the results show general support to the hypotheses. First, consistent with hypotheses 1 and 2, both normative and comparative fit have main effects on extension evaluations (both $F(1, 272) > 114, p < .001$). Their significant interaction suggests that having both fits will further increase extension judgment but the improvement becomes incremental compared with having one fit ($F(1, 272) = 21.55, p < .001$). Second, consistent with hypothesis 3, subjects in the high-resource condition reported more favorable evaluation to extensions with only high normative fit than to those with only comparative fit ($t(74) = 1.98, p = .05$), indicating that normative fit be a better predictor than comparative fit when resource is sufficient. Third, although the effect of cognitive resource failed to reach statistical significance ($F(1, 272) < 1.46, p > .22$), the evaluation pattern is in the hypothesized direction. Extension products with high normative fit but low comparative fit were more favored by subjects with high (vs. low) cognitive resource, while products with high comparative fit but low normative fit were more positively evaluated by subjects with low (vs. high) resource. Fourth, as predicted in hypothesis 5 and 6, consumers who are familiar (vs. not familiar) with the brand gave more positive evaluations to the extensions with high normative fit; and consumers who have more (vs. less) direct experience with the product exemplar showed more favorable judgment to the extensions with high comparative fit.

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TABLE 1
Comparisons of Prototype-Based and Exemplar-Based Evaluations

	Prototype-Based	Exemplar-Based
Inference base and target	Brand → extension	Existing product → extension
Applicable extension fit	Normative fit—the typicality of the extension to the brand schema.	Comparative fit—the similarity between the existing product and the extension.
Mental representation	Prototype-based	Exemplar-based
Memory retrieval during the evaluation	Retrieval of abstract brand associations, but no retrieval of any specific product exemplar.	Retrieval of a specific product exemplar and its characteristics, but no retrieval of any abstract higher-order brand knowledge.
Mental resource required	Moderate	Minimum

TABLE 2
Inference Process and Extension Evaluations

	Cognitive resource			
	Stage one only		Stage one and two	
	Low Normative Fit	High Normative Fit	Low Normative Fit	High Normative Fit
Low Comparative Fit	N/A Low evaluation	N/A Low evaluation	Prototype-based Low evaluation	Prototype-based Relatively high evaluation
High Comparative Fit	Exemplar-based High evaluation	Exemplar-based High evaluation	Exemplar, Prototype Relatively low evaluation	Exemplar, Prototype High evaluation

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Brand Name and Consumer Inference Making in Multigenerational Product Introduction Context

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

What is the significance of Microsoft using brand names that correspond to Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows 2000 and now Windows XP? What message does Intel convey to customers when they change their chip's brand name from 486 to the Pentium series? Although, research has confirmed that brand names associated with numbers and certain letters of the alphabet fit the description of high-tech and complex products (Boyd 1985; Pavia and Costa 1993), little is known as to why that is the case. A related research question that we address in this paper is the role of brand names in affecting upgrade likelihood decisions and the incremental willingness-to-pay for next generation products. Moreover, little is known as to what types of brand names would best summarize different levels of upgrades (normal vs. breakthrough) for next generation products.

According to cognitive representation of information, when these brand names are used in isolation or outside of any context that provides it any substantive meaning, they would be processed in a manner consistent with surface-level processing. However, multi-generational high-tech products are usually interpreted within a time progressive framework. In other words, the notion of time provides life and meaning to what otherwise would be nothing more than a group of numbers. A brand name such as MySoft 3.0 may convey a different meaning to consumers than its counterpart MySoft Elite (prone to meaning-level processing), which are both in the 3rd generation of its life cycle. In short, we expect that in the context of time progression, a brand name that is subject to surface-level processing (e.g., MySoft 3.0) can provide several advantages to firms compared to a brand name that is most likely subject to meaning-level processing (e.g., MySoft Elite). We test this general hypothesis in experiment 1.

In experiment 1, we found that brand name type had an effect on perceived technological improvement, product differentiation, and the degree to which one was willing to pay more for the current version compared to the previous version. Moreover, it was confirmed that the extent to which subjects are willing to pay more for the current version model compared to its predecessor is driven by technological improvement. These results bolster our belief that brand names operate as strong cues for enabling respondents to make inferences about how a current generation of a high tech product may be perceived to be different from its prior generation. Our empirical work is consistent with the results of Brucks, Zeithaml, and Naylor (2000).

In experiment 2, we examined how well different types of brand names can reflect respondent's perceptions of the degree of innovation of an attribute on some key dependent variables. In labeling brands in a sequential manner to reflect generational progression, a common procedure is to adopt progressive numeric labeling (version 1, 2, 3 etc). Such practices are inherently appealing because it is clearly understandable by the consumers as a continuation of prior generation. As such, brand equity and performance expectations can easily be transferred from one generation to the next. Alternatively, firms can pursue brand labeling strategies that signal to the consumer that the next generation product significantly deviates from its prior generation by abandoning sequential branding. A non-sequential brand labeling strategy (e.g., version 1, 2, 3, XT) can break the monotony of the brand signals and suggest

that the next generation product is significantly different from prior generations.

The two types of brand labeling (sequential vs. non-sequential) can be interpreted as either congruent or incongruent with the attribute improvement of the new generation product. That is, if we have a series of brand names in the order of MySoft 1.0, MySoft 2.0, MySoft 3.0 and a new introduction that corresponds to MySoft XT, this can be conceived as either a congruent or an incongruent brand label depending on the nature of the innovation type. Under a breakthrough innovation condition, MySoft XT would be considered congruent brand name because XT conveys non-continuous improvements. Conversely, when brand name MySoft 4.0 is used, it does not convey this information (breakthrough innovation) to consumers accordingly. When congruency exists between brand labeling and attribute improvement, both are used to evaluate products. When incongruency exists between brand labeling and attribute improvement, product information signaling is averaged to form an overall evaluation such that a breakthrough improvement may not be perceived as innovative as it could have been otherwise (i.e., sequential brand labeling attenuates the impact of a breakthrough innovation) or a non-sequential brand labeling can actually enhance the effect of a nominal innovation.

This is similar to the information integration theory such as cognitive algebra introduced in the impression formation literature by Anderson (1965, 1971). According to the cognitive algebra model, when conflicting and incongruent information is present, people tend to engage in an averaging mentality to arrive at a final decision. Our predictions for sequential brand labeling to diminish the effect of a breakthrough innovation and non-sequential brand labeling to improve the beliefs about a normal innovation are consistent with the anchoring and adjustment framework of Hogarth and Einhorn (1992). In simple terms, one information either pulls down or up the belief formed from the other piece of information.

Using a 2 (innovation type: normal vs. breakthrough) x 2 (brand name type: sequential vs. non-sequential) experiment, we found a significant interaction between innovation type and brand name type in that the effect of a breakthrough innovation was stronger for congruent brand names than for incongruent brand names. In particular, respondents expressed greater degree of upgrade, differentiation, willingness-to-pay, worthy of upgrade, and purchase likelihood for the next generation product compared to the current generation product in the breakthrough innovation condition as opposed to the normal innovation condition. The results underscore the importance of having brand names for high-tech products that are congruent with the level of attribute innovation, especially when the innovation is a breakthrough development. However, the effect of a normal innovation had similar effects on the dependent variables regardless of brand name type.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

A Deeper Look at Assortment

Susan M. Broniarczyk, University of Virginia and University of Texas

SESSION OVERVIEW

The construct of assortment has begun to attract attention in consumer behavior. Research has shown that consumer perception of assortment is not a one-to-one function of the number of products offered (Broniarczyk, Hoyer, and McAlister 1998). Consumer assortment perceptions are also affected by the organization of the assortment (Hoch, Bradlow, and Wansink 1999) and heuristic cues such as the size of the display (Broniarczyk et al. 1998). Recent research has moved from examining assortment as a dependent variable to examining the consequences of assortment on consumer decision-making (i.e., assortment as an independent variable). Large assortments have been found to result in consumer confusion (Huffman and Kahn 1998) and demotivate consumer choice (Iyengar and Lepper 2000). This session probes deeper into the effects that assortment may have on consumer decision-making in three important directions: (1) examines the composition of the assortment, (2) examines multiple stages of consumer decision making, examining both choice and consumption decision outcomes, and (3) examines the effect of marketing variables such as the structure of the assortment and retailer signage.

First, the session examined how the probability of purchase from a given assortment is contingent on the complementarity of the features used to differentiate its options. Chernev defined feature complementarity as the degree to which the utility of different product features is additive. He reported data from two experiments documenting that product lines differentiated on noncomplementary attributes tend to be associated with a greater probability of purchase compared to product lines differentiated on complementary attributes.

Second, the session examined the effect of assortment on multiple stages of consumer decision making, examining both choice and consumption decision outcomes. Broniarczyk, Goodman, Griffin, and McAlister reported research that examined both anticipated regret during the choice process as well as experienced regret after consuming the chosen alternative. Kahn and Wasnick reported six lab studies that examine how consumer's perception of variety affects consumption quantities. They showed that perceived variety may also serve as a "consumption rule" or benchmark that consumers use to gauge how many items should be consumed.

Third, the session examined the effect of marketing variables such as structure of the assortment and retailer signage. Kahn and Wasnick reported that structural aspects of an assortment moderate a consumer's perception of the actual variety. Specifically, this perception of assortment variety is influenced by the organization and relative symmetry of the frequencies of the items in the set (entropy) of the assortment. It is this perceived variety of the assortment that influences consumption utility and ultimately contributes to consumption quantity. Broniarczyk, Goodman, Griffin, and McAlister discussed the effect of retail display signage such as product descriptions and best seller tags on consumer processing of large assortments. They reported that these marketing interventions designed to assist consumers and reduce the regret associated with large assortments may instead exacerbate regret.

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"Feature Complementarity and Assortment in Choice"

Alexander Chernev, Northwestern University

How does the relationship between product features influence the overall probability of purchase from a given brand's product line? This research argues that the choice share of a given product line is contingent on the complementarity of the features differentiating choice options. In this context, feature complementarity is associated with the additive properties of the utilities of choice alternatives (Lattin and McAlister 1985). Thus, complementary features, when combined, lead to a greater utility than each feature considered separately. For example, combining cavity prevention and tartar protection is likely to result in a combination that is superior to each feature considered separately. In contrast, combining noncomplementary features does not necessarily increase their overall utility: Blending banana and mint flavors does not necessarily create a superior combination.

This research argues that because complementary features are relatively independent from one another, they can be represented as levels of separate attribute dimensions rather than as levels of the same attribute. Furthermore, because complementary features can be represented as levels of discrete attribute dimensions, consumers are likely to opt for the best performance on *each* attribute; thus, the absence of a given feature will be viewed as a potential loss. This leads to the counterintuitive prediction that differentiating products using complementary features can actually decrease the attractiveness of an individual product.

Consider an offering differentiated on a single attribute (e.g., cavity prevention toothpaste). Adding complementary features to extend the product line (e.g., tartar control, whitening, breath freshening, etc.) highlights the attribute dimensions on which the original product is relatively inferior, thus decreasing its overall attractiveness. It could be argued that each new complementary feature used to extend the product line ultimately makes the extant products less attractive because they are dominated on the attribute made salient by the newly added feature. This research argues that increasing product assortment through complementary features could potentially lower the attractiveness of all alternatives in that assortment.

In contrast, because noncomplementary features tend to be mutually exclusive, they can be represented as different levels of the same attribute. Because the benefits offered by these features are often not additive, combining two or more features does not necessarily bring the feature closer to a consumer's ideal point.

The proposition that feature complementarity moderates the impact of assortment on choice is supported by the data from two experiments. The first experiment examines feature complementarity in a context where consumers are given a single product line and have the option to choose one of the available alternatives or make

no choice at all. The data show that, all else being equal, noncomplementary assortments are more likely to be associated with a greater probability of purchase than complementary assortments. The second experiment examines the impact of feature complementarity in a context where consumers are given a choice between two brands, one featuring a single option and the other featuring either a complementary or noncomplementary product line. The data from this experiment show that the choice share of the complementary product line is lower than the share of the noncomplementary line. Considered together, these findings extend prior product line and assortment research to account for the relationship among different features used to differentiate options in a brand's product line.

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"Too Many Choices: The Effect of Assortment on Anticipated and Experienced Regret"

Susan Broniarczyk, Joseph Goodman, Jill Griffin, and Leigh McAlister, University of Texas at Austin

This research reports two studies that examine how enduring involvement and product information affect consumer reactions when choosing from large assortments. The Iyengar & Lepper (2000) paradox showed that consumers choosing from large assortments experience increased choice difficulty and experienced regret but also increased positive affect. Our Study 1 finds that this paradox is limited to high enduring involvement subjects choosing from a hedonic product category. The results of Study 2 show that marketing interventions to reduce the regret associated with large assortments may instead exacerbate regret. Specifically, we explore the effect of providing two types of information, product descriptions and "best seller" signs.

In Study 1, we extend Iyengar & Lepper's research by examining hedonic (chocolates) versus utilitarian (pens) product categories and consumers with high versus low enduring category involvement. Overall, we replicated Iyengar & Lepper's finding that subjects experience a higher level of choice difficulty and experienced regret when choosing from large relative to small assortments. However, we find that their result that decision fun is higher for large assortments only holds for high enduring involvement subjects in the hedonic category.

In Study 2, we examine two marketing interventions that retailers might introduce to reduce consumer regret when choosing from large hedonic assortments, product descriptions and "best seller" signs. We examine the effect of these interventions on both anticipated regret experienced during the choice process and experienced regret following consumption. Our results show that instead of reducing consumer regret when choosing from large assortments, display information may instead increase consumer regret.

We found that that the availability of product descriptions reduced subjects' anticipated regret relative to a control group. However, actual use of product descriptions was positively associated with higher anticipated and experienced regret. Consistent with Carmon, Wertenbroch, & Zeelenberg (2003), reading descriptions may have increased regret because subjects now knew more about foregone alternatives.

"Best seller" signs were placed on the display of the two top selling products. The presence of "best seller" signs did not increase the choice likelihood of the chocolate but did lead to negative

consumer decision consequences. Relative to the control, signs increased the anticipated regret and negative affect consumers experienced choosing from large assortments. Subjects apparently struggled with how to process the information from the signs and integrate it with their own preferences. Experienced regret was dependent on whether subjects chose a chocolate tagged with "best seller" signage.

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"The Influence of Assortment Structure on Perceived Variety and Consumption Quantities"

Barbara E. Kahn, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania
Brian Wansink, University of Illinois

If consumers are offered an assortment with three different flavors of yogurt, they are likely to consume an average of 23% more yogurt than if they are offered an assortment featuring only one flavor (Rolls et. al. 1981). This example is typical of many consumption situations where consumers must decide how much of a product to consume when there are no formal guidelines to help them (Drenowski, Henderson, Driscoll, and Rolls 1997). Previous research related to packaging has shown that package size (Folkes Martin, and Gupta 1993), shape (Piaget 1969), volume (Wansink 1996), and perceived volume (Raghubir and Krishna 1999) can all contribute to how much one consumes. In the yogurt example, however, it is not packaging but rather the assortment variety that seems to be influencing how much consumers are likely to consume. But how do consumers interpret or perceive the variety of an assortment, and why should this perception of variety affect consumption quantities?

In this research we show that structural aspects of an assortment moderate a consumer's perception of the actual variety. Specifically, this perception of assortment variety is influenced by the organization and symmetry of the frequencies of the items in the set (entropy) of the assortment (Young and Wasserman 2001). It is then this perceived variety of the assortment that influences consumption utility and ultimately contributes to consumption quantity. We show that perceived variety may also serve as a "consumption rule" or benchmark that consumers use to gauge how many items should be consumed.

We find support for our proposals in a series of six lab and field experiments involving adults and children with both food and hedonic non-food items. The first four studies clearly illustrate the robust phenomenon that assortment structure affects consumption quantities. The last two studies show that in addition to influencing perceived variety, assortment structures might also provide consumers with consumption norms that guide them in selecting consumption quantities. It appears that perceived variety and anticipated consumption utility influence consumption quantity up to a point and then the quantity decision appears to be influenced further by consumption rules.

These findings are of relevance to interdisciplinary researchers, yet the most immediate implications of this research are directed toward altering the structure of assortments so that they do not have unintended effects on consumption.

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ROUNDTABLE

Mediation Analysis

Dawn Iacobucci, Northwestern University
Adam Duhachek, Northwestern University

Mediation is often of interest to social science researchers. A theoretical premise posits an intervening variable, an indicative measure of the process through which an independent variable is thought to impact a dependent variable. This roundtable provides the opportunity to clarify some misperceptions and confusions about how to test for mediation effects.

Without question, the most popular means of testing for mediation is the procedure offered by Baron and Kenny (1986). We'll begin by reviewing their classic approach. In their enormously influential paper, Baron and Kenny presented a series of tests to be conducted via regression models. We will review those techniques, and demonstrate that in a database of the *JCR* articles that contain mediation analyses, most analyses were not conducted properly. Oops. Even had they been, the state of the art has moved beyond Baron and Kenny's regression tests. That is, we absolutely agree that their approach has been hugely impactful, but the methodological literature also recognizes that the approach has shortcomings, and is no longer state-of-the-art. More contemporary methodology allows for superior tests of intervening variable effects. We will present some results of simulations to illustrate the conditions under which results obtained using the older methods might be particularly misleading. We provide a tutorial of how to test for mediation, presenting exactly those analytical steps to take and the precise results to report. Don't worry, it's easy!

We plan to raise issues regarding experimental vs. correlational data, cross-sectional vs. longitudinal data, the meaning of "causality" and the central need for strong theoretical defenses of mediation, issues of measurement error and complex inter-construct relationships, yep, a.k.a. "nomological nets." Of key importance, we will discuss the statistical issues regarding the proper assessments of mediation parameter estimates and indices to capture the phenomena.

We conclude by suggesting that mediation analyses are probably conducted more frequently than need be, but for those scholars who wish to do so, we offer clear prescriptions as to the steps to take to support or negate the premise of a mediator. In reviewing the logic of mediation as a concept, we suggest that many times a researcher should simply forgo a test of mediation.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The World According to Garp: The Influence of Lay Theories About Others on Consumer Judgment and Behavior

Gita V. Johar, Columbia University
Anirban Mukhopadhyay, Columbia University

SESSION OVERVIEW

The entire field of attribution theory is dedicated to understanding how individuals make sense of the behavior of others. However, there has been far less study of how these inferences in turn affect the perceiver's own judgments and behavior (Furnham 1988). This special session presents ongoing research that examines this issue and provides a platform for a discussion of fruitful research directions.

Research in consumer behavior on the subject of lay theories can be broadly divided into three areas. One well-researched field is that of lay theories of statistical events, which encompasses decision-theoretic attempts to establish how, rather than being sophisticated statisticians, people use 'heuristics' and therefore suffer from 'biases' in their decision making (e.g., Tversky and Kahneman 1974). Another well-researched field is that of expectancy disconfirmation based satisfaction, where the lay theories under investigation are consumers' expectations about the services and products that they purchase (e.g., Oliver 1980). There is, however a third subset that concerns lay theories about people's motivations, abilities, and behavior. Research on the judgmental and behavioral effects of such lay theories about "people in general" is surprisingly scant.

The question of whether such generalized beliefs about others are accurate has generated much interest (Hoch 1988). A related question, that has only now become the focus of research attention, is how consumers' beliefs about others influence their own judgments and behavior. Recent work has shown that these beliefs can affect predictions of the correspondence bias (Van Boven, Kamada and Gilovich 2000), the endowment effect (Van Boven, Dunning and Loewenstein 1999), and hedonic contrast effects (Novemsky and Ratner 2003). The three papers in this session extend this work examining the accuracy, as well as the judgmental and behavioral impact, of beliefs in diverse domains such as others' preferences, motivations, and self-control.

Ratner and Kubowicz investigate people's beliefs about the extent to which others prefer monetary vs. non-monetary responses from firms in cases of service failure. They find that people overestimate others' desire for monetary rewards. This has interesting implications for managers, who may themselves hold such beliefs and therefore over-emphasize monetary means of service failure redressal. In the second paper, Nelson and Miller look at lay theories about approach and avoidance motivation, testing the hypothesis that observers tend to interpret others' actions as approach motivated even when they recognize that their own identical choices were motivated by avoidance. Their results demonstrate this asymmetry, which can have profound effects in several domains of public consumption. Finally, Mukhopadhyay and Johar examine the effects of lay theories of self-control on goal setting and achievement behavior. They find that people who believe that self-control is a limited resource tend to set fewer goals than those who believe that self-control is an unlimited resource. Limited self-control theorists are also less likely to succeed at keeping resolutions unless they are high in self-efficacy.

The topic of the accuracy and impact of lay theories is today at the cutting edge of psychology and consumer research. Taken

together, the three papers in this session constitute a significant step in the study of the effect of possibly inaccurate lay theories on consumers' judgments and behavior, across a variety of domains. This session addresses an important new area, and is relevant to the study of attributions, inference making, implicit theories, and behavioral effects. To this end, the reference in the session title to John Irving's classic novel serves as an ironic reminder about the multiplicity of possible viewpoints, and the pervasive sway of social influence.

"Apologies and Coupons to Resolve Consumer Complaints: How Appealing is Each to You Versus to Others?"

Rebecca K. Ratner and Claudia Kubowicz, University of North Carolina at-Chapel Hill

Research within the consumer complaint literature indicates that consumers care a lot about apologies (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar, 1998), especially after a service failure (Gilly and Gelb, 1982). However, apologies are not always forthcoming from firms (Tax et al.). How accurate are people's beliefs about the extent to which consumers care about apologies (i.e., non-monetary responses) relative to other types of actions (e.g., monetary compensation or a free gift) that a firm could take? Do decision-makers underestimate the extent to which others care about apologies?

Previous research demonstrated that individuals often overestimate the extent to which their peers' attitudes and behaviors are based on material self-interest (Miller and Ratner 1998). For example, people think that material stake as a function of group membership will have a larger impact than it actually does on others' attitudes toward social policies. Other studies provided evidence that people overestimate the impact of financial payment on their peers' willingness to engage in prosocial behaviors. In one study (Miller and Ratner 1996), participants overestimated the extent to which their peers' willingness to sign up for psychology experiments depends on the amount they would be paid. In another study, participants overestimated the impact of payment on their peers' willingness to participate as a donor in an upcoming blood drive (Miller and Ratner 1998, Study 1).

In the present research, we investigate whether individuals overestimate the extent to which their peers favor monetary responses from firms attempting to resolve a consumer complaint. Our key question is whether individuals understand the extent to which others care about apologies or whether they instead think that others favor more tangible/money-focused responses (e.g., a coupon for a free product). Based on the results reported by Miller and Ratner (1998), we predict that individuals will overestimate how attractive to others are the responses that enhance material self-interest (e.g., free products).

In a series of experiments, we asked individuals to rate the attractiveness of two possible responses from a firm to a consumer complaint. For example, participants read about a situation in which they have an unpleasant interaction with a rude cashier at a coffee shop. They were asked which of the following they would prefer from the coffee shop if they had registered their dissatisfaction: receiving something for free (a coupon for a free drink) or receiving an apology but no mention is made of a coupon. In several studies,

participants were asked which response they would prefer and which response they think that others would prefer, both in within-subjects and between-subjects designs. Across these studies, participants expected that others' preference for the apology would be weaker than their own.

We tested whether these results would extend to product failures as well as the service failure context described earlier. This is important to explore because previous research indicates that individuals' preferences for tangible rewards are greater in cases of product rather than service failure (Gilly and Gelb 1982). To test this, we made a slight revision to the earlier scenario: instead of describing an encounter with a rude cashier (a service failure), we described to some participants an experience at the coffee shop in which their drink contained spoiled milk (a product failure). As predicted, we found that participants' responses more strongly favored the apology response in the case of the service failure than the case of the product failure. Importantly, the self-other difference emerged again (and there was no interaction), indicating that for product as well as service failure, individuals thought that others' preference for the apology would be weaker than their own.

In additional studies, we find that individuals say they would be less inclined to choose the apology option on behalf of others than for themselves. We also find that people think others' preference for the apology is weaker than their own preference even if the product is a free gift to be sent to their home rather than a coupon; therefore, it appears that the self-other difference is not driven by a perceived differential willingness on their own versus others' part to return to the store (i.e., to redeem a coupon).

The results of these experiments suggest that people overestimate the extent to which others desire monetary responses rather than non-monetary, intangible responses (e.g., an apology) from a firm in cases of consumer dissatisfaction. As a result, managers may devote insufficient attention to providing non-monetary rewards to resolve consumer complaints. This pattern of results indicates how an erroneous lay belief can have important implications for the decisions made by marketers and managers.

“Seeing Choices in the Rejections of Others: Inferring Approach Motivation in Avoidance Motivated Decisions”

Leif D. Nelson, New York University and Dale T. Miller, Stanford University

In an unfortunately frequent circumstance, we are forced to decide between alternatives that offer no particular positives, but have differing degrees of negativity. Under these constraints, we pursue decisions that minimize the harm of the decision outcome, avoiding the most aversive of the possible options. These avoidance motivated decisions are even acknowledged in the pithy cliché of someone choosing the “lesser of two evils.” Nevertheless, despite the ubiquity of this understanding, the presence of avoidance motives runs against our lay theories about how people make decisions.

We hypothesize that when observing someone else make a decision, people infer that approach motives are operating, even when the decision is avoidance motivated. In many consumer decision circumstances, people sort through a number of possible options and select an option that they like most. For the observer, an approach-motivated account is both parsimonious and, in many cases, accurate. The approach-motivation assumption, which operates as a handy heuristic when interpreting preferences much of the time, becomes a liability when interpreting avoidance motivated decisions. In short, because people always seem to choose what they like, observers erroneously assume that people always like what they choose.

Across four studies we investigated the tendency for observers to assume that other people like what they choose. In Study 1, we investigated the asymmetry in motive ascription by looking at how people felt about the voting behavior of others. Prior to the 2000 presidential election, we asked people to identify which candidate they were planning to vote for, whether they were casting their vote principally because they liked their choice or because they disliked the alternative, and why they thought other voters were casting their vote. Consistent with our predictions, most people assumed that other voters were voting for the candidate that they liked, whereas most participants indicated that their own vote was cast out of dislike for the alternative. Despite being personally motivated by avoidance, people judged others in line with their lay theories of approach motivation.

In the second study, people were brought into the laboratory to taste soft-drink flavors and evaluate them. Participants tasted two pairs of sodas, each idiographically determined to have a positive and a neutral flavor or a neutral and a negative flavor. Participants were asked to decide which flavor they preferred and were subsequently told that most other people made the identical decision. Finally, everyone stated how much they would be willing to spend for a can of each of the four soda options, and how much they thought other people would be willing to spend. When making the avoidance-motivated decision between the neutral and the negative options, people thought that similar choosing others would be willing to spend more money for both options than they would themselves. Even when personally guided by avoidance motives, people inferred that others were acting out of approach motives, and therefore liked both of the alternatives more than they did themselves. As predicted, there was no difference for predicted willingness to pay when people were guided by approach motives.

One possible alternative account is that people assume underlying positive feelings for the stimuli (presidential candidates and soft drinks), and therefore assume that other people like the options even when they personally do not. We attempted to rule out this possibility by conducting a similar study in a domain that was explicitly negative: deciding between prison sentences. Participants read a description of someone facing a 10-year sentence in minimum-security prison. Some participants were further told that this same person chose the minimum-security prison sentence over an alternative of the same length at a maximum-security prison “where inmates were forced to do hard labor.” Despite the overwhelming negativity of the decision context, and explicit dominance relationship between the two options, observers inferred that the convict would be willing to spend less money and would be less likely to flee the country if he had chosen the prison sentence than if it had simply been assigned. Even when the context is negative, observers seem to infer a hint of approach motives in the choices of others.

In the final study we returned to a tasting paradigm, this time with a variety of jellybean flavors. Replicating the effects of Study 2, avoidance-motivated participants thought that someone else making the identical decision would be willing to spend more for the same options. We extended this finding by showing that participants selected a suboptimal flavor for the other person, consistent with perceived preferences but not with actual preferences. Finally, when told that they would have to share a single flavor with the other person, out of politeness for the other's apparent preference, participants selected a flavor that was suboptimal for themselves as well as for the other.

Across our four studies, observers tended to perceive approach motives in the avoidance motivated behavior of others. The strong lay belief that other people like what they choose belies personal

experience with numerous decisions guided by dislike for what is rejected. In each of the studies presented here, we examine the impact that these beliefs can have in our interpretation of others, but each of these effects can have consequences for personal decisions as well. Study 4 showed that an ill-conceived politeness can lead to suboptimal decisions, but a fundamental misunderstanding of underlying motives can have more pervasive consequences as well. Beliefs about normative preferences can have a direct impact on the decisions people make. The systematic misperceptions of these norms shown in these studies suggest that people may erroneously see others as liking their chosen options, and neglecting the real uniformity in what other people dislike.

“Where There Is a Will, Is There a Way? The Effect of Lay Theories of Self-Control on Goal Setting and Achievement”

Anirban Mukhopadhyay, *Columbia University* and Gita V. Johar, *Columbia University*

Goal directed behavior has often been modeled as a two-stage process, i.e., the setting of personal goals followed by the effort to achieve them (e.g. Thaler and Shefrin 1981). Research in this area also often recommends strategies with which to bolster self-control and achieve chosen goals. In this paper, we present a different look at the relationship between self-control and goal setting/achievement. Rather than assuming that success at achieving goals is a manifestation of effective self-control, we propose that lay theories or naïve beliefs about the nature of self-control affect the setting and achieving of goals.

Lay theories have been shown to affect judgments and behavior in a number of domains (Furnham 1988). For example, people’s beliefs about the role of individual differences in predicting behavior can influence their impressions of others. Dweck’s program of research demonstrates that theories about whether intelligence is a fixed quantity or an augmentable reserve can affect learning strategies and responses to failure (Dweck 1999). Similarly, we suggest that people’s beliefs about self-control can influence their goal-directed behavior. Specifically, the belief that self-control is a restricted resource (as per Muraven and Baumeister 2000) can determine the number of goals one sets for oneself. Success at attaining these goals will then also depend on an individual trait, self-efficacy, which determines persistence at challenging tasks.

We examine our propositions in the naturalistic but under-examined domain of New Years’ resolutions. It is interesting to note that this popular annual practice closely mimics prototypical goal-directed behavior. New Years’ resolutions are characterized first by people identifying favored outcomes (Thaler and Shefrin’s “planners”), and then by their working towards them (“doers”). Moreover, every resolution can be looked back on and evaluated as being a success or a failure.

Given this context, three studies were conducted to test these propositions in the domain of setting personal resolutions. The first two studies investigated the effects of lay theories that are manipulated or measured on setting resolutions, both general as well as consumption oriented. In Study 1, participants in a 2 x 2 between subjects design read passages that stated that self-control is a limited [or unlimited] resource that is also fixed [or malleable]. Following this “Reading Comprehension” survey was a “Motivation Assessment Questionnaire,” that looked completely different from the reading comprehension survey (e.g., a different font) to prevent participants from making any connections between the lay theory manipulation and this measure. Participants were presented with a blank table and asked to list all their current “personal, academic, or financial / consumption-related” goals, in as much detail as possible. It was found that “Unlimited-Malleable” theo-

rists set the highest number of resolutions; moreover, the resolutions were rated to be equally important across conditions.

Study 2 provided more direct evidence for the role of lay theories of self-control by showing that making people aware of their lay theory prior to setting goals can reverse the effect such that Limited-Malleable theorists set the highest number of resolutions. Participants’ lay theories were measured rather than manipulated, and the order of the lay theory measurement and goal-setting tasks was counterbalanced. As expected, the results of Study 1 held when the lay theories were measured afterwards, and were reversed (for malleable theorists) when the measurement preceded the goal setting.

The final field experiment extended the investigation to success or failure at goal achievement, manipulating respondents’ lay theories and assessing their impact on New Year’s resolutions in real time. This study was conducted in two phases, with respondents listing their planned resolutions in November, and then reporting on their success at keeping these resolutions the following March. Respondents’ lay theories were manipulated by making them read passages from credible sources that either stated that self-control is a limited resource (Muraven and Baumeister 2000) or that it is an unlimited resource (Descartes, quoted in Elster 1999). Consistent with the previous studies, unlimited theorists (respondents who read the Descartes passage) set more resolutions than limited theorists. Further, limited theorists who were low in self-efficacy reported significantly less success at keeping their resolutions than those in other conditions.

To summarize, we demonstrate that peoples’ lay beliefs about the nature of self-control can have a direct and tangible impact on their goal-directed behavior. Across the studies we measure or control for several factors including participants’ ratings of own self-control, goal difficulty, and number of goals. These non-intuitive findings are not only of relevance to the immediate theoretical study of naïve theories and self-control, but indeed to many other domains where planned action towards single and/or multiple goals is involved (e.g. savings, investment, health-related behaviors).

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Consuming Cyborgs: Researching Posthuman Consumer Culture
Markus Giesler, York University

SESSION OVERVIEW

Technological products and networks all around us dramatically change not only the electronic infrastructure of the markets, but also the social fabrics of consumers' lives. Yet despite its widely acknowledged significance, particularly in the context of consumption, technology has rarely been mentioned in the consumer behavior literature. As Glazer (1995) has pointed out, most of our understanding of consumer behavior is at best "technology neutral." To improve upon this impoverished view, the idea of posthuman consumer culture was explored and developed in this session as the symbiotic relationship between (1) the cultural frameworks that orient how consumers interact with commodities, (2) the economic priorities of the market and (3) the "heteroglossia of voices" on how, through the excessive consumption of high-technological products and networks, to alter our notions of what means to be human in the Cartesian sense.

First, Alladi Venkatesh illustrated the difference between traditional and posthuman epistemologies in marketing and explained why consumer researchers should attend with particular vigilance to posthuman thought on the epistemological level of analysis. Markus Giesler then presented ethnographic findings from Napster.com and proposed the cyborg as posthuman consumer and the prism of European (Luhmannian) social systems theory as one possible posthuman epistemology of consumption. Analyzing the consumption of popular Japanese Anime action figures, cultural critic and technoculture writer Erik Davis finally developed and explored steps to an ecology of virtual commodities.

The discussion leader Robert Kozinets commented on the ability of each presentation to provide novel insight into the cultural interplay between consumption and technology, to emphasize the import of a posthuman epistemology of consumption beyond the Cartesian legacy of the subject, and to explode posthuman dualisms such as materiality and information or mutation and hyperreality. Among other aspects, the discussion pointed to the conceptual groundwork laid by cyberneticist Norbert Wiener and phenomenologist Martin Heidegger and raised the importance to better understand the deep "technopolitical" consequences of posthuman consumer culture and society with respect to the posthuman incredulity towards the Cartesian subject.

"Posthumanism and the Sciences of the Artificial: Some New Directions for the Epistemologies of Consumption"

Alladi Venkatesh, University of California

The term, posthumanism has come to mean several things from non-aging bodies to grafting of silicon chips into the brain to probing into the deeper recesses of the mind. Recent writings on posthumanism suggest that we may be entering a new era concerning how we conceptualize human bodies and mental structures (Gray 2001, Halberstam and Livingstone 1995, Haraway 1991, Hayles 1999, Rutsky 1999). Some consumer scholars are also attempting to explore posthumanism and its implications to consumption and marketing practices (Venkatesh, Karababa, and Ger 2002). Although not strictly cast in terms of posthumanism, Zaltman's (2003) recent work on ZMET techniques contain some elements of posthumanism.

What is posthumanism? Katherine Hayles (1999) looks at it as the intersection of human mind and intelligence machines. Donna Haraway (1991) repeats a similar theme in her work on cyborgs.

Both Hayles and Haraway rather unwittingly capture the notion of the "artificial" as espoused in an earlier work by Herbert Simon (1982). Featherstone and Burrows (1995) view posthumanism as creating new cultures of technological embodiment. In this presentation, I will be concerned with the notion of the artificial and its connection to posthumanism. I will attempt to discuss the implications of these developments as we reconfigure our epistemologies of consumption.

I will begin the paper with Herbert Simon's seminal work, *The Sciences of the Artificial*. In his well-known book resulting from a lecture series, Simon has argued that many branches of human knowledge and practices—science, business, law, architecture etc, are concerned with the contingent, that is, not with how things are but how things might be—in short with "design."

For Simon all human ingenuity has been directed toward the creation of the artificial as opposed to what is already given, the nature. Nature is not a human creation, it already exists. But many entities we consider to be natural according to Simon are really man-made. Thus, the forest may be a phenomenon of nature; a farm is not, and the plowed field is no more part of nature than an asphalted street. However, what is remarkable about the world of the artificial is that all artificial entities are subject to the laws of nature and there can be no exception. An airplane is able to fly not because it defies the laws of gravity but because it obeys the laws to their last detail, otherwise the result can be quite disastrous.

It is in this context of the construction of the artificial that I place the whole discourse on posthumanism.

The human civilization is a march toward the creation of artifacts that are designed to adapt to natural systems. Associated with each artifact is a set of practices. When several artifacts are assembled together we create a system of practices. The basis of any system of practices is a system of knowledge. Systems of knowledge are known as epistemologies. As human beings, we try to adapt to the systems that we create. When the systems do not serve our purpose, we change the systems and the artifacts. It means that we also change our epistemologies. All these elements, artifacts, systems, and epistemologies are the artifacts of human ingenuity. However, in the Cartesian world, there has been one constant, the human mind, for it is sacrosanct and defines what it is to be human. In our march through history, we have been careful not to tamper with this human element. Only in science fiction we see attempts to change the human character with some serious consequences. Science fiction captures our imagination but sets limits to it. Thus the world of Frankenstein or Dracula excites our imagination but reminds us what can happen if we play with nature. In Simon's work, we do not deal with the artifacts of science fiction but objects of practical design that we create in the real world in order to experience them physically or phenomenologically. When this involves transgressing the world of the natural, we take risks. Another term for this risk taking is human progress.

To elaborate this point, Simon was careful to argue that none of the artifacts destroy the humanness of our lives. All systems are created so we preserve their human quality. The various artifacts we create are meant to enrich our lives. In the world of artifacts, Simon did envision the possibility of the merging of the human and the machine. He called this artificial intelligence. However, he was careful to note that what he is after is not to turn the human into machine, but to make machines more human. Thus computers are

computational machines of extraordinary capacity. It is in the same vein, that biological models have been injected into artifacts. The airplane was invented to mimic the flying bird. Similarly, the automobile was invented so it could run faster than a horse. In all these examples, the humanness did not change, only the world of artifacts did.

Where does posthumanism fit into this? Posthumanism seems to change the “humanness” of our existential condition rather radically. Simply put, it is an attempt to alter our notions of what is to be human in the Cartesian sense. According to Haraway (1995), Featherstone and Burrows (1995), Hayles (1999) and others, this can occur through cybernetic advancements. It is an attempt to extend the Simoinian world where machines can not only do routine computational tasks but can actually think logically and act linguistically. Posthumanism thus envisions changing the make-up what it is to be human. Thus, for example, electronic chips can be grafted into the human body and brain and all the primordial notions of what it is to be human can be altered in the process.

The consequences of posthumanistic advances to the world of consumption are quite substantial. Traditionally, our notions of what a consumer is whether he/she is an information processor or a cognitive subject or a cultural subject is derived from systems of humanistic epistemologies. The question is what kind of epistemologies can we envision in a posthuman world? My paper will address these issues.

“Consuming Cyborgs: Posthuman Consumer Culture and its Impact on the Conduct of Marketing”

Markus Giesler, Kellogg School of Management

In this presentation, I will discuss important findings from two years of extensive ethnographic case research on Napster.com and offer a variety of new insights into the praxis of posthuman consumption. In the consumption of Napster we find articulated some of the key facets of posthuman consumer culture that are interwoven in some of the most popular contemporary entertainment consumption practices (e.g. Giesler and Pohlmann 2003a, 2003b). I will show how Napster has promoted an emancipative space of choice enabled through infomedia technology, cultivated by interconnected cyborg consumers and operationalized through the code of the electronic gift. In doing so, my examination of Napster consumption provides both an excellent example of posthuman reality in consumer culture and an example of posthuman epistemology utilized in qualitative consumer research.

To best reveal the idea of posthuman consumer culture, I examine the phenomena that it structures: Napster consumer’s Internet music related consumption experiences. Interviews with Napster consumers and archival data were collected over the past three years to map micro consumption discourse and practices in order to build an understanding of the moderato and macro cultural processes constructing posthuman consumer culture. Two complementary methodological approaches that are oriented toward theory construction are used: the deductively-oriented approach of Burawoy’s (1991) extended-case method and the inductively-oriented approach of Sherry and Kozinets’ (2000) netnography.

This presentation (a) advances the theoretical notion of posthuman consumption; (b) searches for evidence of its existence in entertainment consumption situations; (c) discovers some of the manners, mechanisms, and particularities of posthuman consumption; and (d) situates these findings within the broader sociological and consumer literatures. My findings reveal that (1) Oscillation and paradox are hypothesized to have important effect as two basic cultural logics of posthuman consumption and (2) a systemic five-step schema is developed to illustrate the dynamics of posthuman consumption on the moderato level of analysis. (3) Information,

materiality, mutation and hyperreality are introduced as dimensions for (4) the semiotic square of posthuman consumption, a unifying framework that offers a macro perspective on posthuman consumption.

“Who Am We?” asks Sherry Turkle at the beginning of her seminal book *Life on the Screen—Identity in the Age of the Internet* (1995) alluding to her self as a multiple, distributed system and the paradigmatic move from modernist calculation toward postmodernist simulation. As we stand on the boundary between the real and the virtual, our experience recalls what Victor Turner (1985) termed a liminal moment, a moment of passage when new cultural symbols and meanings can emerge. Napster consumption uniquely inflects the complex ways in which these multiple viewpoints become enacted through positional “We(s)” that alter Napster participants’ consumption meanings through the exchange of songs on the screen. In an age where materiality tends towards ascendancy over information, what metaphor could be more fitting than that of the organism as an information system linked to prosthetic machines—the *cybernetic organism* also known as the *cyborg*?

“The Emergence of Virtual Commodities”

Erik Davis TechGnosis

Let us define “posthuman consumption” as the circulation of desire and commodities in environments that are so highly mediated and technological that it begins to generate behavior and situations that are quite foreign to existing thinking about what markets are and what consumers want. Then we can expect to find posthuman consumerism particularly advanced in the most virtual of environments today—the massive multiplayer online games like Ultimate Online or Everquest. And we do. These environments are not simply breeding their own increasingly complex economies (largely based on the scarcity of various objects, including land, as well as the man-hours logged improving characters). They are also giving us a glimpse into the sort of retail environments that may increasingly shape consumer experience—especially among the young and wired consumers who constitute the leading edge of posthuman consumption.

In these environments, I argue, the logic of brands is almost entirely severed from actual material commodities, becoming a kind of virtual animated style element—like the different avatar bodies that are bought off the shelf in Neil Stephenson’s (1992) *Snowcrash*. Here we see a space where the already rapidly oscillating movements of fashion can even more quickly sculpt the infinitely plastic material of virtual space. Nonetheless, the virtual environment also poses tremendous challenges to traditional models of consumption and intellectual property, and monetizing virtual reality will remain a pitched battle for some time.

Analyzing prominent science fiction literature such as William Gibson’s (1984) *Neuromancer* and Neil Stephenson’s (1992) *Snowcrash* in this presentation, I identify the ferocious cultural role of the “virtual,” defined as a sort of free play of the imagination that is captured and circulated through technological rather than psychological means. I suggest that posthuman consumers will and already do live inside of cartoons. Insights gained will help consumer researchers better understand the growing import of the virtual in every domain of everyday material life. The consumption of goods in the real world will be increasingly shaped by the fluid fantasies of the virtual, a process we can begin to understand by looking at the transformation of the styles associated with animation, especially Japanese anime comic consumption.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Advances in the Study of Creative Cognition in Consumer Behavior

James E. Burroughs, University of Virginia
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SESSION OVERVIEW

Since Guilford's (1950) landmark presidential address to the *American Psychological Association*, creativity has been an integral part of psychology, particularly in the domain of problem solving. A great deal of this work has focused on what is termed, "creative cognition" or how various thought processes and abilities impact creative outcomes (Finke, Ward and Smith 1991).

By contrast, research on creativity in consumer behavior is scant. Consumer researchers have focused almost exclusively on understanding the ways in which consumers learn about, construct preferences for, and choose among existing product alternatives. It is presumed that marketers identify and provide for consumer needs with limited regard for the possibility that consumers may meet needs creatively. Yet in many situations consumer needs are specific and unique, requiring the individual to play an integral part in manufacturing a novel solution to a given consumption problem. Examples include the need for an appropriate menu for a dinner party, for the "right" business casual wardrobe for a conference, for an updated room decor, or for a romantic week-long vacation. Across a variety of domains, consumers often act as their own agent of change, sourcing necessary components and assembling the parts to meet specific goals. More than 20 years ago, Hirschman (1980, p. 283) noted this deficiency in consumer research: "investigations of creativity have not focused on its potential applicability to everyday consumption activities." Unfortunately, this situation remains.

In the interest integrating creativity more fully into consumer research, we brought together three papers that examined theoretical, practical, and methodological aspects of creative cognition in a consumption context. The first paper presented by Darren Dahl and Page Moreau examines the role of constraints on generative and exploratory thinking by consumers in the context of new product ideation. This work also extends into the motivational and affective aspects of creative thought, considering not only the quality of consumers' creative thoughts but also their enjoyment for the task. The second paper presented by Tom Ward also used consumer product ideation as the platform of investigation, but focuses on the impact of abstract versus concrete thinking on creative outcomes. Finally, the third paper presented by Jim Burroughs and David Mick examines the role of metaphoric thinking ability in creative consumption. They reported on the development of a new instrument for assessing metaphoric thinking ability, including an initial test of the instrument in a consumer problem-solving context.

To date, understanding of the nature and role of creativity in consumer behavior is limited. The three papers presented are designed to address a different aspect of this deficit. Dahl and Moreau's work provides much needed theory on the role of environmental conditions (constraints in particular) in impacting creative consumption. Ward's research harbors practical implications for the types of thinking that should be engendered to optimize creative outcomes in areas such as new product design. Burroughs and Mick's work makes more of a methodological contribution, providing a tool for assessing an important construct within the realm of creativity. Combined, it is hoped that this research will stimulate greater appreciation for, and interest in, the study of an undeniably important aspect of human functioning.

"Manufacturing the Solution: The Role of Constraints in Consumer Creativity"

Darren Dahl, University of British Columbia
Page Moreau, University of Colorado

In this research, we examine the influence of constraints on the creative process and its outcomes. Three studies are undertaken to this end. Our first study examines the influence of input constraints on the type of information processing consumers undertake in a creative task. Specifically, we examine the effect of (1) restricting the parts available and (2) mandating the number of parts on the strategies used by consumers in creating a new toy. Using protocol data, we trace consumer's information processing strategies and show that both types of input constraints promote the use of more generative and exploratory thinking. A set of professional designers rated the creativity of the toys developed in the task, and we find a strong, positive relationship between the rated creativity and the degree of generative and exploratory thinking employed.

Using the same design as the first, the second study examines the influence of the same two input constraints on the consumers' subjective experience during the task. Specifically, we examine the influence of constraints on different forms of motivation, and we find that when the constraints are operating, consumers enjoy the task less and are less likely to have their motivational needs (i.e., autonomy and competence) met. Thus, while the constraints we employed improved the quality of the outcomes of the creative task, they reduced the quality of the consumer's experience. We know from the success of retailers who support consumers' creative endeavors (e.g., Michaels, Lowe's, Martha Stewart), however, that offering constrained creative opportunities is rewarded in the marketplace.

To better understand this apparent contradiction, it's important to take a closer look at the types of constraints operating. In the first two studies, the constraints employed involved the inputs used by participants when constructing their new idea. But there were no constraints on how these inputs were used or combined to form the outcome. Hence, an almost infinite number of solutions could still be constructed. Would constraining the process or the outcome influence perceptions of autonomy and competence differently than constraining the inputs? To answer this question, we ran a third study in a more realistic consumer situation, and we manipulated whether or not the outcome and the process were constrained. Specifically, we had participants bake cookies under a variety of task conditions. Half of the participants were required to make a specific cookie and to decorate it in a specific way; the other half were simply required to make a cookie. To manipulate constraints on the process, we varied the amount of instruction provided. Finally, we measured baking experience, hypothesizing it as a moderator of the effects of the constraints. All three factors interacted to influence consumers' subjective experience.

"Strategic Approach and the Degree of Novelty in New Idea Generation"

Thomas B. Ward, University of Alabama

In this research I examine the role of alternative idea generation strategies in consumer creativity and new product ideation. In particular, I focus on the influence of abstract versus concrete

thought on the originality and acceptability of ideas people develop for new sports and new forms of entertainment. Previous research has shown that the majority of individuals who are asked to develop new ideas for a given domain (e.g., novel fruit or tools) begin by retrieving highly accessible, specific domain instances, whereas a minority begin by considering more abstract forms of information. The latter produce ideas that are rated as more original, suggesting that more product innovation might be obtained through abstract as opposed to concrete strategies. In the present studies I asked whether the additional originality afforded by abstract approaches might be obtained at a cost to the acceptability of the ideas. Can too much originality negatively impact acceptability?

For the domain of sports, participants performed one of two separate tasks. Fifty-eight participants listed known instances of sports and 87 used their imagination to develop ideas for new sports and then reported on the factors that had influenced their creations. The lists of known instances were used to determine the most accessible instances in the domain (e.g., baseball was highly accessible as indicated by the fact that it was listed by 56 of 58 participants, whereas shot put was listed by only 2). The new sport designs and reports of influential factors were used to determine which participants had relied on known instances in designing their novel sport and which sport instances were used most often. Consistent with previous research, the majority of participants (69%) in the imagination task reported retrieving specific known instances of sports (e.g., baseball), whereas the minority reported thinking about more abstract considerations (e.g., the purpose of competition in sport). Accessibility of known instances was influential in that there was a strong positive correlation between the number of participants who listed a given sport as a known instance and the number who used that sport as the basis for their novel creation, $r=.78$. Also consistent with previous research, the novel sports designed by those who retrieved specific known sport instances, were rated as significantly less original than those developed by participants who accessed more abstract forms of knowledge. However, they also received higher acceptability scores, in particular, ratings of how likely it is that people would want to play the new sport. In addition, there was a significant negative correlation between ratings of originality and ratings of the likelihood people would play the sport, $r=-.23$. Similar results were obtained in a study that used forms of entertainment as the knowledge domain.

The results suggest that there is a balance between the originality of new product ideas and their likelihood of their being deemed acceptable, and this balance is directly influenced by the strategy used in developing the ideas. Abstraction increases originality, but can decrease acceptability. When more novelty is desirable in a new product, accessing abstract principles could be most appropriate; when more familiarity is the goal, retrieval and modification of specific known exemplars may be more effective.

“Development of a Test of Metaphoric Thinking Ability and Initial Validation through a Creativity Experiment”

James E. Burroughs, University of Virginia

David Glen Mick, University of Virginia

In this research we develop and test an instrument for assessing metaphoric thinking ability (the MTA—SC; see Appendix). Metaphors are fundamental in human thought (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Because they take abstract, remote and unfamiliar concepts and relate them through the concrete and familiar, they are also indispensable in the creative process. Cognitively speaking, they help connect solutions from previously disparate domains to new problem contexts (Runco 1991). Unfortunately, empirical research on the relation between creativity and metaphor has been hampered

by a lack of valid methods for assessing metaphoric thinking ability. Moreover, the few instruments that do exist are beset by a number of limitations. They are either applicable to a limited population (i.e. children; Polio and Polio 1979), cumbersome to administer and/or score (see e.g., Barron 1988), or they explicitly call for the use of metaphors in completing the task (see e.g., Helstrup 1988). This latter situation is problematic for creativity research because it is essential that individuals be allowed to freely access metaphors in structuring thought. Given these limitations, we sought to develop a new instrument that would be useful for adults, easy to administer and score, and would allow metaphor to naturally represent itself in thought.

We followed standard scale development procedures (i.e. generation of multiple items, analysis and paring of items, etc.) and discovered a sentence completion task worked best. Respondents are provided with sentence stems that can then be completed either literally or metaphorically. For example, one truncate is, “Helping someone is...” Responses are then independently scored on three levels. The lowest score is assigned for literal completions, such as, “Helping someone is the right thing to do.” Intermediate scores are assigned for statements which are metaphorical in content, but represent “dead” metaphors (i.e. they have become integrated into common use in the language). An example is, “Helping someone is to lend a hand.” Finally, the highest score is assigned for statements that are metaphorical and generative in content. For example, one of our respondents said, “Helping someone is to make a deposit in the bank of Karma”.

Two validity checks were undertaken on the new instrument. First, a known-groups validity check was conducted using copywriters at Grey advertising in New York. Confirming our expectations, these copywriters scored significantly higher on the MTA—SC than respondents drawn from the general population. Second, the nomological validity of the test was assessed. Respondents in an experiment were given a basic consumption problem to solve (facing a social situation of being late for a dinner when they discover their shoes are scuffed and they are out of polish). The results indicate that individuals higher in metaphoric thinking ability produced more creative solutions to this problem. We hope that this new instrument opens the way for new research on metaphor and creativity.

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Examining the Mediating Relationship of “Play” on Ritual Enduring Involvement

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is the examination of the effects of perceived sacredness of a particular consumer ritual on consumers' level of “play” and enduring involvement. In this study, the sociological concept of “play” is operationalized as flow, *communitas*, and ecstasy. We also examine the relationship between the components of play and enduring involvement and how play can serve as a mediator. In a study of experienced golfers, play is found to mediate the relationship between the perception of golf as being sacred and one's enduring involvement in the game.

INTRODUCTION

Belk, Walendorf, and Sherry (1989) examined sacredness as consumption that exceeds everyday needs. They contended that sacred consumption has the potential to become a vehicle of transcendent experience. In this study, we examine the consumption of a male-dominated ritual—golf—that we believe has the potential to be considered sacred. We contend that the more people consider a ritual domain to be sacred, the more likely they will gain the positive outcomes of a ritual, which, in this case, are operationalized as ecstasy, flow, and *communitas*. We also contend that those who consider golf to be sacred will also experience higher levels of enduring involvement, but such an effect will be mediated by our conceptualization of “play” and the individual components of play (*communitas*, flow, and ecstasy). In order to achieve enduring involvement, we contend that perceptions of sacredness are not enough; people need to experience the “fruits” of a ritual first before they can establish enduring involvement (see Figure 1). More specifically, we hypothesize that seeing golf as “sacred” will have a direct effect on one's enduring involvement, but also that one's experience of “play” will serve to enhance that relationship.

Golf may be considered a ritual because it satisfies the conditions noted by Rook (1985), who asserts that ritual behavior can include both everyday and extraordinary human experiences. More specifically, ritual behaviors are positive and meaningful aspects of life that occur in fixed, episodic sequences. These behaviors have a tendency to be repeated over time in a dramatic and serious fashion with inner intensity. Our background interviews and research indicate that golf is definitely an activity that can be dramatically scripted, treated with inner intensity, and repeated over time.

We begin this paper with an investigation into sacredness. We then examine our conceptualization of play and discuss the individual components (*communitas*, flow, and ecstasy) that comprise play. Next, we explore the hypothesized relationships involving sacredness, play, and enduring involvement. The results of these relationships will be analyzed and discussed.

BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Sacred versus Profane

According to Durkheim (1915), sacred items are special things, protected, isolated, separated, prohibited, and inaccessible. Durkheim, as interpreted by Belk et al. (1989), saw sacred things being beyond individual creation. He also contended that the sacred could emerge collectively when society removes things from ordinary human usage. Belk et al. (1989) contend that sacred does not necessarily have to mean religious; some elements of life can have no connection to religion and yet be revered, feared, and treated with respect by consumers.

Belk et al. (1989) explain that sacredness can best be defined in terms of contrasting it with the profane (i.e., the ordinary parts of life). In determining sacredness then, it is important to consider its opposition to the profane. Belk et al. (1989) came up with eleven other properties of sacredness other than opposition to the profane that make something sacred, including ritual, myth, *kratophany*, *hierophany*, ecstasy and flow, and *communitas*. Belk et al. describe *communitas* and myth as primarily social concepts, and ecstasy and flow as primarily psychological. Sacred consumer domains potentially fall under six categories: places, times, tangible things, intangibles, persons, and experiences (Belk et al. 1989). We argue that golf is especially susceptible to being considered sacred due to its long, rich tradition, adherence to strict conduct and etiquette, and how seriously people treat the game.

Play: *Communitas*, Flow, and Ecstasy

In this section, we examine the concept of “play” and demonstrate how the game of golf is capable of providing a playful experience. The term play or playfulness has been used in a variety of contexts, but all definitions appear to describe play as a sense of self-determined freedom without constraints. For example, Deegan (1989, 1998) describes play as anti-structure in nature where one is truly liberated from the underlying manipulative structures of modern society. Holt (1995) describes play in a consumption context as capturing the autotelic dimension, in which the consumer-object-consumer interaction has no ulterior end. Play that is not truly liberating is what Deegan (1989) calls “fun.” Fun has the appearance of play, but it is not. Fun, or “good times,” is the outcome of rituals generated in such contexts as discrimination, capitalism, bureaucracy, and technological control. Thus, Deegan labels fun as a flawed *communitas* experience.

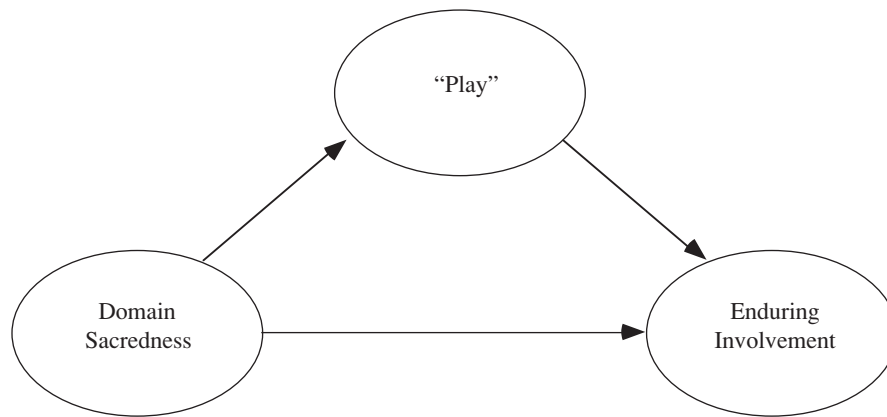
Based upon the definitions listed above, however, we contend that play in the context of a sacred ritual experience can be defined in terms of *communitas*, flow, and ecstasy. Even though more constructs could be added in the context play, we restrict our use to these in order to capture what we think are the most common experiences gained from leisure activities such as golf. These experiences, for the most part, closely coincide with Deegan's (1998) use of “play” and “playfulness,” which are key components in the ritual framework.

Communitas: With *communitas*, social categories and status disappear, and people of the same condition develop intense but fleeting feelings of comradeship and egalitarianism. Authentic *communitas* can be established as a result of play, “wherein each member's essential humanity is recognized and shared” (Deegan 1998, p. 7).

Flow: Flow is described as exceptional moments that stand out as being the most memorable yet effortless in people's lives. It is akin to the concept of “being in the zone,” whereby a person loses track of self-consciousness and time. During flow, “a person loses contact with ordinary reality and experiences heightened sensory appreciation and flow of time and space” (Deegan 1989, p. 26). Flow is the serenity a person feels when the heart, will, and mind are all on the same page (Csikzentmihalyi 1997).

Activities likely to produce flow include those that have clear-cut yet challenging goals. “Conflicting desires, intentions, and thoughts jostle each other in consciousness, and we are helpless to keep them in line” (Csikzentmihalyi 1997, p. 28). Flow, or peak experience, occurs when a person's skills are fully engaged in

FIGURE 1
The Mediating relationship of play



accomplishing a challenging goal. It is evident that golf is capable of producing a flow experience because it does provide clear-cut goals as well as other attributes for its participants. Golf may be particularly suited to such experiences due to its serene settings and challenging nature.

Ecstasy: Ecstasy, for the purpose of this study, is the third operationalized component of play. Belk et al. (1989) describe the sacred as being capable of producing ecstatic experiences whereby a person stands outside of one's self. It has also been described as a joy that arises from the transcendental reality of sacred things. In addition, ecstasy is a momentary experience, which marks the extraordinary character of sacred experiences (see Belk et al. 1989). Ecstasy should be present in golf, as it is in settings such as baseball spectating (albeit rare), due to its ability to create dramatic situations (e.g., the unexpected spectacular shot) and outstanding performances (see Holt 1992). However, like flow and *communitas*, it is unlikely that a person who feels alienated from a domain will experience ecstasy due to the fact that the mind is not free from disturbance. Alienation blocks the needed mental capacity to experience positive, if not transcendental, emotions.

Belk et al. (1989) describe *communitas*, flow, and ecstasy as properties of sacredness. While perhaps a property of sacredness, it appears from Belk et al.'s (1989) description that *communitas* could also be an outcome of a sacred ritual experience. Belk et al. (1989) describe ecstasy and flow in similar fashions, writing that “the sacred is capable of producing ecstatic experiences” (p. 8), while flow refers to the psychological “effect of participation in the sacred” (p. 9). Deegan (1989) alludes to *communitas* as an outcome of the ritual experience as well. In describing baseball spectating as sacred ritual, Holt (1992) uses a passage from Turner (1969) that suggests transcendent experience, or ecstasy, is an outcome of sacred ritual. Overall, it is quite clear that all three components of “play” (*communitas*, flow and ecstasy) are likely outcomes of a sacred ritual experience; those who report higher levels of perceived sacredness are likely to report higher levels of *communitas*, flow, and ecstasy.

H_{1a} : The greater one perceives golf to possess sacredness, the greater the level of *communitas*.

H_{1b} : The greater one perceives golf to possess sacredness, the greater the level of flow.

H_{1c} : The greater one perceives golf to possess sacredness, the greater the level of ecstasy.

Sacredness and Enduring Involvement

Richins and Bloch (1986) suggest that enduring involvement is the degree to which the product relates to the self or the pleasure one receives from the product. Higie and Feick (1989) suggest that enduring involvement is “an individual difference variable representing an arousal potential of a product or activity that causes personal relevance” (p. 690). They found that enduring involvement has two distinct components: hedonism and self-expression. Based upon Belk et al.'s (1989) analysis of the sacred and what emerges from things that are considered sacred (i.e., heightened commitment), we argue that those who consider golf to be sacred will also display higher levels of enduring involvement.

H_2 : The greater one perceives golf to possess sacredness, the greater the level of enduring involvement.

We also contend that play reinforces the personal importance of a ritual, which ultimately leads to one establishing enduring involvement. When people experience salient aspects of play, such as flow, they are likely to attempt to re-experience that state (Celsi et al. 1993). Further, one can argue that having the desire to repeat an activity can ultimately result in that activity becoming more serious and central to that person, therefore helping that person establish enduring involvement. In sum, we contend that experiencing higher levels of play will lead to higher levels of enduring involvement.

H_3 : The greater the level of play experienced while playing golf, the greater the level of enduring involvement.

The Mediating Effect of Play in the Sacredness—Enduring Involvement Relationship

Even though it is expected that higher levels of sacredness will have a positive influence on enduring involvement, we also expect that play and the components of play will mediate a relationship between sacredness and enduring involvement. A variable is said to serve as a mediator to the extent it explains the relationship between a predictor and criterion (Baron and Kenny 1986). We contend that when people experience the positive effects (*communitas*, flow,

TABLE 1
Scale Reliabilities for Domain Sacredness, Play and Enduring Involvement (After Purification)

Scale	Pretest 1	Pretest 2	Pretest 3	Final Survey
Domain Sacredness				.84* (6 items)
Places	.92	.85	.74	.78
Times	.94	.93	.91	.73
Tangibles	.86	.88	.90	.90
Intangibles	.86	.78	.90	.83
Persons	.74	.88	.81	.84
Experiences	.81	.83	.87	.82
Play				.90*
Communitas	NA	.86	.86	.79
Flow	.85	.89	.89	.81
Ecstasy	NA	.94	.90	.84
Enduring Involvement	.96	.93	.93	.86 (2 factors)

NOTE—Some scale items may have been altered or added from one pretest to the next.

and ecstasy) of something they consider to be sacred, they are likely to experience higher levels of enduring involvement than they would without experiencing these effects. Play is that part of a ritual that leads to ongoing pleasure and makes a person want to continue in that activity and establish what is known as enduring involvement. Play is also that part of ritual that helps a person make sense of everyday life, makes a person feel alive, part of a community, and re-energized (Deegan 1989). In short, we contend that play is that part of a ritual that makes the meaning of an activity more salient and more memorable. Thus, while sacredness is seen to lead to enduring involvement in the game of golf, that relationship is enhanced through the experience of play in the game's rituals.

H₄: The relationship between sacredness and enduring involvement is mediated by the linear combination of "play" and each of its individual components.

METHODOLOGY

Scale Development

The scales for this study were taken from the literature and adapted to the context of golf or were created from conceptual definitions. Enduring involvement and flow fall under the previous category while domain sacredness, communitas, and ecstasy fall under the latter. Each scale was tested on three different occasions (not including the final survey) with undergraduate college students. All scales were purified going through an iterative process involving the analyses of item-to-total correlations and the exploratory factor analyses (see Gerbing and Anderson 1988).

For sacredness, we used conceptual definitions from Belk et al. (1989) to create our items. Items were created from each of the six domains of places, times, tangible things, intangibles, persons, and experiences. We obtained a one-factor solution with six items and an ending alpha of .84.

For the concept of play, which was operationalized through communitas, flow, and ecstasy, scale purification was more simplified and straightforward. Using conceptual definitions from Belk et al. (1989), Deegan (1989, 1998), Holt (1995), and Turner (1969),

we formulated a six-item scale, one-factor scale for communitas that had a final alpha of .79. Flow, in our study, is a seven-item one-factor scale developed largely from the conceptual definitions of Belk et al. (1989), Csikzentmihalyi (1990, 1997), and Deegan (1989, 1998) and from a scale from Stein et al. (1995). Flow had a final alpha of .81. Ecstasy was also developed from conceptual definitions taken from Belk et al. (1989). Ecstasy is a six-item, one-factor scale with a final alpha of .84. The three constructs, which were highly correlated, were combined to get an overall measure of play, with an aggregate alpha of .90.

For the enduring involvement scale, items from both McIntrye (1989) and Higie and Feick (1989) were adapted into a golf context for this study. We also added some items that combined the use of pleasure with one's intent to play golf for the long run. Even though it might be possible to argue that one's long run intent bordered on a behavioral outcome, we felt that such a component only added to our understanding of the depth of one's involvement in golf by focusing on the time aspect of enduring involvement. Enduring involvement in this study is a nine-item, two-factor scale with an ending alpha of .86 (see Table 1).

Sample

In all, 2,000 questionnaires were sent to golfers belonging to a midwestern state golf association, with 1,200 going to women. The total list had over 17,000 names, with 14,683 men and 3,068 women. The list was cleaned of all names that had either incomplete addresses or addresses of the participant's home golf course. Once all names were alphabetized, approximately every 18th name on the men's list was selected while every third name on the women's list was selected. A total of 165 surveys were returned due to insufficient or outdated addresses. The overall response rate for the mailed questionnaires was 41.8 percent. The response rate for women (43.5 percent) was slightly higher than that for men (39.3 percent). A total of 767 surveys were entered.

RESULTS

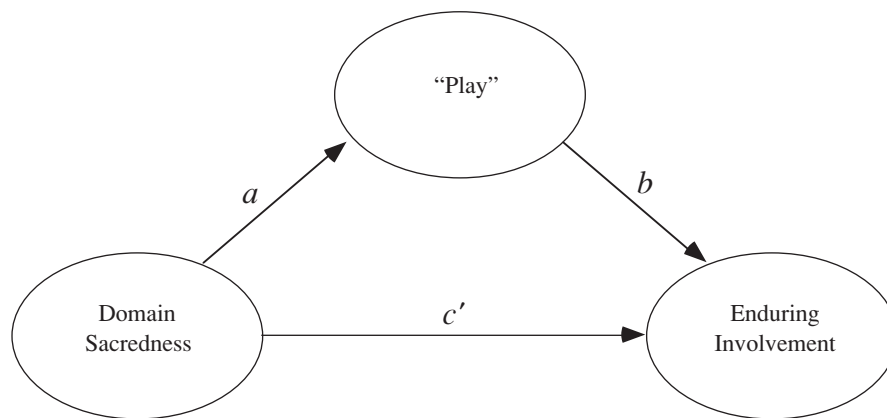
We begin this section with a look at the construct means. Enduring involvement had the highest mean (5.32) followed by

TABLE 2
Means for Model Variables

Scale	Grand Mean (N=767)	5 years or less (N=56)	5 – 20 years (N=362)	Over 20 years (N=349)	F (sig.)
Play	4.59	4.34	4.60	4.62	3.43 (.03)
Comm.	4.98	4.65	4.92	5.08	8.51 (.00)
Flow	5.12	4.94	5.12	5.14	1.35 (.26)
Ecstasy	3.68	3.42	3.76	3.63	3.48 (.03)
Enduring Inv.	5.32	4.93	5.27	5.43	10.76 (.00)

Note—Scales ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

FIGURE 2
The Mediating relationship of play



flow (5.12) and *communitas* (4.98). Only the mean for ecstasy came under the scale’s midpoint at 3.68, indicating that golfers experience few moments of ecstasy on the golf course (see Table 2).

In terms of our hypothesized relationships, results generally went in the predicted direction. H_{1a} through H_{1c} tested whether a positive relationship exists between sacredness and the components of play: *communitas*, flow, and ecstasy. Each path was significant at an alpha of .05. The standardized coefficient between sacredness and *communitas* was .45 ($p < .001$), the path between sacredness and flow was .53 ($p < .001$), and the path between sacredness and ecstasy was .65 ($p < .001$). When run by years playing golf, all of these paths were significant for both men and women. The path between sacredness and the linear combination of the play dimensions was also significant at .65 ($p < .001$). When this latter path was run by sex, the value for men was .68 ($p < .001$) and for women it was .63 ($p < .001$). Hypotheses H_{1a} - H_{1c} were supported. See Appendix 1 for the reported results.

With H_2 we examined the relationship between sacredness and enduring involvement. The direct effect of sacredness on enduring involvement using a single predictor model was significant ($b = .56$, $p < .001$). When run by sex, the effects were significant for both men ($b = .54$, $p < .001$) and women ($b = .57$, $p < .001$). H_2 was supported (see Appendix 1).

With H_3 we examined the relationship between play and enduring involvement using both the linear combination of play and each of its individual components. This relationship was significant ($b = .72$, $p < .001$). It was also significant for men ($b = .67$, $p < .001$) and women ($b = .75$, $p < .001$) separately. When each of the components of play (*communitas*, flow, and ecstasy) was regressed individually with enduring involvement, each path was significant (see Appendix 1). Support for H_3 was provided.

With H_4 , we examined the mediating relationship of play. The mediating relationship of play between sacredness and enduring involvement was partially supported, suggesting only partial mediation. We used a four-step process in which we first demonstrated that the initial variable (domain sacredness) is correlated with the criterion variable (enduring involvement). This value is called path c . Secondly, we showed that the initial variable is correlated with the mediator (play) (see Baron and Kenny 1986). This value is called path a (see Figure 2). For the first path (c), the value was .56 ($p < .001$), while for the second path (a) the value was .65 ($p < .001$) with a standard error of .02.

The third step involved setting up the initial variable (sacredness) and the mediator (play) as predictors of enduring involvement with both predictors entered at the same time. This step is used to obtain values b and c' . For path b , or the relationship between play

APPENDIX 1
Standardized Regression Coefficients for Various Model Hypotheses

Path (X,Y)	Coeff.	Hypothesis	Decision	Regressed w/ other variables
DS, Play	.65*			
Men	.68*			
Women	.63*			
DS, Communitas	.45*	H _{1a}	Supported	
Men	.47*			
Women	.44*			
DS, Flow	.53*	H _{1b}	Supported	
Men	.52*			
Women	.53*			
DS, Ecstasy	.65*	H _{1c}	Supported	
Men	.68*			
Women	.64*			
DS, EI		.56*	H ₂	Supported
.17*				
Men	.54*			.16**
Women	.57*			.15*
Play, EI	.72*	H ₃	Supported	.61*
Men	.67*			.56*
Women	.76*			.66*
Communitas, EI	.58*	H ₃	Supported	.41*
Men	.53*			.37*
Women	.60*			.44*
Flow, EI	.72*	H ₃	Supported	.58*
Men	.64*			.50*
Women	.76*			.63*
Ecstasy, EI	.55*	H ₃	Supported	.32*
Men	.51*			.26*
Women	.59*			.38*

Note—DS = Domain Sacredness; EI = Enduring Involvement. “Play” is the linear combination of communitas, flow, and ecstasy.

*p < .001

**p < .05

and enduring involvement, we obtained a value of .61 with a standard error of .04. For *c'* we obtained a value of .17.

In terms of our hypothesized relationships, results generally went in the predicted direction. H_{1a} through H_{1c} tested whether a positive relationship exists between sacredness to play is *a* and its standard error is *s_a*, and the path from play to enduring involvement is *b* and its standard error *s_b*. The goal is to divide the difference between *c* (.56) and *c'* (.17), or the product of *a* (.65) and *b* (.62), by the value obtained from this formula. If this figure exceeds the critical value of 1.96, there is a mediating effect. To achieve complete mediation between sacredness and enduring involvement, the effect of sacredness on enduring involvement must be equal to zero. In our case, this value equaled .40 (p<.001), indicating only partial mediation. Using the value of .026 ($\sqrt{b^2s_a^2 + a^2s_b^2 + s_a^2s_b^2}$) obtained via the modified test of significance (see Baron and Kenny 1986), the z-value of 15.38 for the mediated effect was significant at the 1.96 critical value.

When the results were run by sex, the z-value for men was 8.10 while for women it was 13.60. Partial mediating effects were also obtained for the components of play, whereby communitas, flow,

and ecstasy were individually tested as mediators. The mediating role was the same for men and women. H₄ was supported (see Appendix 1).

DISCUSSION

The mediating relationship of play between sacredness and enduring involvement is perhaps the most important finding in this study. The significance of this partial mediator indicates that people are more likely to establish enduring involvement in an activity, especially one that might be considered a ritual, if they can experience the positive results of that ritual. While perhaps commonsensical, this indicates to practitioners that although people might hold an activity or product in the utmost or sacred esteem, marketers would be better served if they fostered environments conducive to establishing flow and communitas. Exploring such environments in future studies would add more to our understanding of “playful” situations.

The study investigated experienced golfers’ perspectives; these golfers had joined a state golf association, had played the game for several years, and have established handicaps. Experience

APPENDIX 2

Values for the Mediating Effect of Play and Its Components on the Domain Sacredness-Enduring Involvement Relationship

Mediator	a (X,M)	b (M,Y)	a * b (c- c')	SE of Mediating Effect	Significance of a * b (z value)
Play	.65	.62	.396	.026	15.38
Men	.68	.60	.380	.047	8.10
Women	.63	.64	.417	.031	13.60
Communitas	.45	.42	.185	.017	11.13
Men	.47	.40	.173	.028	6.12
Women	.44	.43	.190	.021	9.22
Flow	.53	.58	.306	.020	15.66
Men	.52	.53	.258	.032	8.16
Women	.53	.62	.334	.025	13.44
Ecstasy	.65	.36	.209	.021	9.99
Men	.68	.32	.178	.037	4.82
Women	.64	.40	.244	.027	9.03

Note - z-values exceeding 1.96 indicate mediating relationship. Standardized coefficients are used for mediating effects.

in the game leads to the perception of its sacred elements, and the experience of "play" enhances the relationship between sacredness and enduring involvement. These findings represent the goal of the golf industry in terms of the "love of the game."

However, the study does not shed great light on the lived experience of the beginning golfer. The golf industry as a whole is experiencing a "churning effect," as participants leave nearly at the same rate that others enter. Given that the perception of sacredness appears to grow with experience, beginners are unlikely to become enduringly involved in the game because of the perception of golf as being sacred. Thus, we expect that the role of play in establishing enduring involvement is even more important for this segment. While all participants "play" golf, clearly many do not experience play. The golf industry needs to focus more attention to how it can enhance flow, communitas, and ecstasy for this segment.

A contribution of this study is the effort to operationalize "sacredness" and the components of "play." While further work is needed, at least we provide starting points.

CONCLUSION

Establishing enduring involvement is important in any consumer domain because it leads to ongoing product-related information search and transmission (Bloch 1981). In addition, people with enduring involvement are likely to be opinion leaders, who influence others' opinions in a particular product category or activity (see Higie and Feick 1989).

As indicated by Holt (1992), baseball spectating may indeed exist as a sacred ritual, but only to some of its participants. In this study, golf may indeed exist as a sacred ritual to some participants, but it must be ferreted out in a systematic way through demographic, behavioral, or other segmentation variables to determine who in particular exhibits these characteristics. There appears to be a difference in how many years a person plays golf and whether they consider golf to be sacred. Future studies should not only consider this variable, but others such as frequency of play, average golf score, whether people play private versus public courses, and age of golfer to determine different levels of perceived sacredness.

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Sex-Typing of Leisure Activities: A Test of Two Theories

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ABSTRACT

Leisure activities are considered here as a subset of consumption, and we are interested in the relationship between gender schema and leisure activities. In order to test rival predictions about gender schema, sex-typing of leisure activities is related to two individual difference measures: gender personality (Bem 1981) and gender-role attitudes (Spence 1984). 271 subjects were given a list of 75 leisure activities and asked to indicate whether they felt the activity was masculine, feminine, or somewhere in between. We do not find support for Bem's (1981) theory, but do find partial support for Spence's (1984) theory. The findings indicate that males sex-type leisure activities to a greater extent than females. Both sex and gender-role attitudes are found to be significant ($p < .05$) predictors of sex-typing.

INTRODUCTION

All cultures have developed a network of associations that surround the concepts of masculinity and femininity. Thus, in addition to male and female role assignments, individuals are also expected to acquire sex-specific personality attributes. In other words, to be masculine or feminine is defined within specific cultures. This process, whereby a society transforms male and female into masculine and feminine is known as the process of sex typing (Bem 1981). However, individuals within a culture may differ from one another in the degree to which they adopt or subscribe to cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity.

In recent decades, "appropriate" roles for men and women have undergone major changes; and such changes are manifest in changing patterns of behavior (Scanzoni 1978). For example, it is not uncommon to find women who hunt or go to football games. Nor is it especially rare to find men who knit or enjoy the ballet. The evolution of traditional sex-role patterns may be sufficient impetus for researchers to become less interested in the male-female dichotomy and more interested in the self-perceptions that are presumed to go along with being male or female.

To date, it has been well established that there are differences in leisure behavior between men and women (Gentry and Doering 1979; Hawes 1978; Ragheb 1980; Kleiber and Hemmer 1981 and Hirschman 1984; White and Gruber 1985). Among these different studies, however, one finds little evidence to indicate whether the bases of differences are biological and/or the result of socialization experiences. In addition, these studies have concentrated on only a small number of leisure activities for comparison and therefore cannot be used to draw conclusions about leisure behavior in general, but only conclusions about the few activities examined.

Gender ideologies structure perceptions of leisure. That is, leisure activities, as a category of experience, are gendered and shaped by social context (Green, Hebron and Woodard 1990). In order to explain differences among women and men in their sex-typing of leisure activities, one must first analyze these differences on the basis of sex-typed socialization (Deem 1986).

Gender Related Theory and Concepts

Gender is a sociological concept, referring to a social category scheme such that these categories are mutually exclusive (Sherif 1982). Gender refers to the cultural definitions of what appropriate male or female behavior involves (Henderson 1989). As

Constantinople (1973) observed in her analysis of masculinity-femininity tests, conventional theories have implicitly assumed that these various categories of masculine and feminine personality attributes and behaviors flow together to form a single bipolar continuum. It is presumed that individuals can be assigned a single place along this hypothetical masculinity-femininity dimension, with most men falling toward the masculine pole and most women falling toward the feminine pole.

Bem's (1981) Unifactorial Gender Schema Theory

Bem (1974) made an important addition to this conceptualization. The essential difference between her approach and that of earlier investigators lies in the attention paid in her theory to the men and women who fall at the center of the hypothetical masculinity-femininity continuum. These individuals are described as non-sex-typed, in contrast to masculine men and feminine women (who are described as sex-typed individuals). Non-sex-typed individuals exhibit a mixture of stereotypically masculine and feminine qualities or fail to exhibit many of either.

Bem (1981) has linked these notions about sex typing to the concept of gender schemata. Gender schema theory proposes that sex-typed individuals have a greater readiness than non-sex-typed individuals do to engage in gender-schematic processing. That is, sex-typed individuals have a generalized readiness to process information in terms of a gender schema (i.e., a network of sex-linked associations that organizes and guides an individual's perceptions). In contrast, non-sex-typed individuals are characterized as aschematic individuals who are relatively unresponsive to stereotypically masculine and feminine cues when processing information.

Operationally, BEM assesses sex-typing by means of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), a self-report measure in which individuals can be classified into one of three categories: (a) masculine sex-typed; (b) feminine sex-typed (both are high on one sexual dimension, low on the other); and (c) non-sex-typed. The last category is divided into two possibilities: (c1) androgynous-high on both sexual dimensions, or (c2) undifferentiated-low on both sexual dimensions. Bem's theory predicts that masculine men and feminine women should engage in gender-schematic processing, consistently organizing information on the basis of gender-linked associations, and that androgynous and undifferentiated men and women should not engage in such gender-schematic processing.

There are mixed opinions about the core properties of femininity and masculinity and their relationship with other gender-related phenomena. Bem (1974) predicts a strong relationship between gender identity (masculinity, femininity and androgynous) and gender-related phenomena. She states that knowledge of an individual's typological status permits generalizations about the degree of sex-typing or gender schematization and other gender-related behaviors preferred or adopted by that individual.

Spence's (1984) Multi-Factorial Theory of Gender Identity

Spence criticizes this view; she proposes a weak relationship between an individual's masculine and feminine personality attributes and adopted gender-stereotyped behaviors and beliefs. The theory is based on the view that children's emerging sense of gender identity initially stimulates a child to adopt gender-stereotyped behaviors and beliefs. However, once gender identity is firmly established, other factors (i.e., gender role attitudes) take over to

protect and confirm one's sense of gender identity. Thus, variables leading to individual differences in the enactment of gender roles include not only situational factors, but also such internal dispositions as attitudes toward the appropriateness of maintaining traditional gender role distinctions, personal preferences for certain kinds of activities, and perceptions (realistic or unrealistic) of the positive or negative consequences of acting in certain ways.

Study Purpose and Objectives

With past gender theory in mind, we now discuss the purpose of the current study. It is generally accepted that perceptions of the suitability of particular leisure activities for males and females exist, and are based on sex-related stereotypes. Colley (1987) cites two sources from which these sex-related perceptions may emanate. First, they may be based on views of what is appropriate for the roles men and women enact at work and in the home. Second, perceptions may reflect stereotypes of male and female physical and psychological traits (particularly in relation to sport participation).

The appropriateness of particular leisure activities for males or females is often used as a predictor for participation. However, research has only investigated the sex-appropriateness of sports and physical activities within the leisure domain (Colley, Nash, O'Donnell and Restorick 1987). Therefore, the first research objective is to create and validate a comprehensive list of leisure activities and to classify these activities as "masculine," "feminine," or "neutral".

The second objective is to investigate the determinants of sex-typing of leisure activities. The theories of Bem (1981) and Spence (1984) purport to explain the phenomenon of sex-typing; the former takes a personality approach, while the latter takes an attitudinal approach toward understanding sex-typing. A central issue in testing Bem and Spence's theories, concerns whether a personality approach or an attitude approach is more appropriate. Although personality research has contributed much to our understanding of psychological phenomena, some researchers are disenchanted with the sometimes weak relationships, which appear to exist between personality and behavior (Kassarjian and Sheffet 1991). Spence's attitude approach, within the domain of sex-typing, represents one possible alternative. Thus, this study investigates the effect of gender personality and gender-role attitudes upon sex-typing of leisure activities, and seeks to determine the individual and combined effects of these gender-related phenomena upon sex-typing of leisure activities.

Previous Research

Despite the practical and social interest associated with the sex-typing of leisure activities, only one study in recent literature has examined whether leisure activities are perceived as masculine, feminine or neutral. Gruber (1980) surveyed interests, knowledge and sex-typing of leisure activities and found that of twenty-nine activities, seven were sex-typed as masculine and six were sex-typed as feminine by both males and females. However, his analysis involved only sports and skilled activities. In addition, only one predictor was considered as a determinant of sex-typing: sex of the respondent.

A more comprehensive study by Colley, Nash, O'Donnell and Restorick (1987) investigated the effect of sex, gender personality attributes, gender-role attitude and participation on the number of sports sex-typed as male and the number of sports sex-typed as female. They found that these predictors explained 37.5% of the variance in the number of male sex-typed sports and 14% of the variance in the number of sports sex-typed for females. Here again,

the research focus concentrated not on leisure activities per se, but on the narrower realm of sports and physical activities.

Research Hypotheses

Thus, based upon prior literature, a clear distinction can be made between gender-role attitudes and gender identity (masculine and feminine personality attributes). In order to test the implications of Bem's (1981) and Spence's (1984) theories regarding the determinants of sex-typing, support for and statement of three hypotheses follow.

Studies have found that, from early childhood onwards, males are under greater pressure than females to conform to sex-appropriate behavior (Maccoby and Jacklin 1974). Thus, men may be more likely than women to sex-type leisure activities, as specified by H1:

H1: Men will be more likely to sex-type leisure activities than will women.

Hypothesis two is proposed to test Bem's theory, which predicts sex-typed men and women (those exhibiting masculine or feminine personality traits) are more likely to label leisure activities as being more masculine or more feminine, thus engaging in gender-schematic processing. Whereas, non-sex-typed men and women (those exhibiting androgynous or undifferentiated personality traits) will not engage in gender-schematic processing, and so are more likely to label leisure activities as being either masculine or feminine. Thus,

H2: "Masculine" men and "feminine" women, as defined by the Bem Sex Role Inventory, will be more likely to sex-type leisure activities than will men and women with nontraditional gender-role attitudes.

Finally, hypothesis three is proposed to test Spence's theory, which predicts a strong relationship between gender-role attitudes and adopted gender-stereotyped beliefs. From this prediction, it is reasoned that men and women with traditional gender-role attitudes will label leisure activities as more masculine or more feminine. Conversely, those individuals having nontraditional gender-role attitudes, are less likely to make such assignments, and will view leisure activities as either masculine or feminine.

H3: Men and women with traditional gender-role attitudes will label leisure activities as either "more masculine" or "more feminine".

METHODS

Pretest

A sample of 120 business students at a large southwestern university was utilized. Each was given a pre-test of a written, multi-part instrument. Section I of the questionnaire required the respondent to indicate on an 11-point scale whether seventy-five leisure activities are either extremely masculine, extremely feminine or gender neutral. This inventory of leisure activities was generated by combining previously developed taxonomies of participation (cf. Ragheb 1980 and Hawes; Talarzyk and Blackwell 1975). Additional activities were added to this list based on input from experts on leisure behavior. One purpose of the pretest was to ascertain whether using such a large number of leisure activities presented too tedious and fatiguing a task. The results indicated that not only was the task not fatiguing, but that, in fact, respondents felt it was "fun." The instrument was reduced to a 7-point scale.

Shading was added to every other activity, for it was found that respondents lost their place within the questionnaire.

Sample

Two samples of respondents were asked to complete the revised multi-part questionnaire. The first sample consisted of 218 business students at the same university, but not including those who participated in the pre-test. A secondary sample consisted of the adult membership of a Girl Scout Council representing a southern region.

It was felt that these two samples were diverse, thus allowing for more varied and generalizable results. The questionnaire was mailed to one hundred male members and one hundred female members of the Girl Scout Council with an enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Of the 200 mailed, 53 were returned (resulting in a 26.5% response rate). The questionnaire was also administered in a classroom setting to students enrolled in introductory business courses as part of an extra credit assignment.

Measures

Sex-Typing. Using the same inventory of leisure activities, respondents were asked to rate on a seven-point scale whether each of the 75 activities are: extremely masculine (3), extremely feminine (-3), either masculine or feminine (0), or somewhat in between 0 and 3 or 0 and -3. Based on these scores, a classification system was devised to categorize the activities as masculine, feminine, or neutral. For each respondent, activities were categorized as masculine if any degree of masculinity was perceived (3, 2, or 1), feminine if any degree of femininity was perceived (1, 2, or 3) or neutral (0). We report the total number of males and females endorsing the activities as masculine or feminine by greater than 50% of the sample as sex-typed. This separation is further noted in tables 1 through 3.

Gender Role Attitudes. Gender-role attitudes were measured using the Attitudes toward Women Scale (Spence and Helmreich 1978), a fifteen-item instrument that contains statements describing the rights, roles, and privileges women ought to have or be permitted to have. Respondents indicated their agreement with each statement on a four-point scale ranging from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly." Low scores indicate a more traditional, conservative attitude toward gender roles.

Masculinity-Femininity. The masculine and feminine personality scores were measured using the Personal attribute questionnaire (Spence and Helmreich and Stapp 1975), which consists of two major scales. The M-Scale contains eight items describing characteristics that are descriptive of masculine personality traits. Similarly, the F-Scale contains eight items describing qualities more characteristic of feminine personality traits. Respondents indicated on a horizontal, 5-point scale the extent to which each phrase describes him or her, with items summed to yield a total M score and a total F score for each respondent. Sex-typed individuals are those scoring high on one sexual dimension, low on the other.

Demographic Items. Finally, a designation of the sex of the respondent was requested. This was coded as a zero-one dummy variable.

Regression

A regression using ordinary least squares is used to determine the degree of sex-typing. The dependent variable, degree of sex-typing, relates to the number of leisure activities an individual labels as either masculine or feminine. Three independent variables are investigated to determine their effect upon sex-typing: biological sex, gender-role attitudes, and gender identity (sex-typed vs. non-sex-typed). Thus, the regression equation can be expressed as:

$$\text{Sex Typing} = f(\text{Biological Sex, Gender-Role Attitudes, Gender Identity})$$

RESULTS

Sex-Typing of Sports

Having developed a comprehensive list of leisure activities, the results of this study indicate that many leisure activities are not sex-typed. In fact, of the 75 leisure activities surveyed, 33 were identified as neutral (greater than 50% of the sample). Many of these leisure activities can be categorized as media-related: watching TV, listening to the music (e.g., radio, tapes, CDs), going to movies, renting movies and reading magazines. Also identified as appropriate for either male or female, were a variety of outdoor activities such as jogging, bicycling, playing tennis and swimming. Several activities, described as individual activities, were not sex-typed by more than half of the sample. These included reading a book for pleasure, taking a nap, and doing crossword puzzles.

More leisure activities were sex-typed for females (33) than for males (28) (see Tables 1 and 2). Leisure activities sex-typed as masculine included those requiring physical activity (e.g., playing football, playing basketball, working out at a gym), outdoor activities (e.g., hunting, fishing, canoeing), and other more passive activities (reading newspapers and taking a nap).

Those leisure activities sex-typed as feminine included activities such as: sewing, aerobics, shopping, cooking, and talking on the phone. Many of the feminine-typed activities were related to cultural activities (e.g., attendance at the ballet, opera and theater plays, visiting art museums, playing the piano, and painting or drawing).

A higher proportion of males than females, sex-typed leisure activities for both sexes—providing support for hypothesis 1. Chi-square tests indicated that for most of the masculine-typed activities (23 of 28) this sex difference was statistically significant ($p < .05$, see Table 1). This sex difference tended to be most marked for activities, which require physical strength or relate to sports or outdoor activities. Some interesting exceptions included playing cards and taking a nap. However, both women and men were in agreement concerning the masculine identity of hunting, playing checkers or chess, playing backgammon and collecting (i.e., stamps or coins).

A greater consensus was exhibited between the sexes for the feminine-typed leisure activities. Out of the 33 leisure activities sex-typed as feminine, chi-square tests indicated only 11 activities in which this sex difference was statistically significant ($p < .05$, see Table 2). For example, this sex difference was most marked for such leisure activities as visiting with friends, dancing, playing badminton, and nature study (e.g., bird watching).

Finally, Table 3 shows those leisure activities not sex-typed by greater than 20% of the sample. In other words, these activities were perceived as gender neutral by at least 20% of our sample. We use the 20% cut-off, since so many of the activities in our sample are sex-typed. Out of these 66 leisure activities categorized as "either", 53 were identified as neutral by a greater percentage of females than males. Thus, more females identified more leisure activities as gender neutral than the males did. Chi-square tests indicated that this sex difference was statistically significant ($p < .05$, see Table 3) for 48 of the activities sex-typed as "either".

Correlation Analyses

Table 4 shows a correlation matrix of the three predictors and one criterion variable (number of sex-typed leisure activities=NLA). As shown in Table 4, both sex and gender-role attitudes were significantly ($p < .01$) related to NLA. As predicted by H1, males sex-typed more than females and, as predicted by H3 (using the

TABLE 1
Leisure Activities Sex-Typed As Masculine

	Total %	Males %	Females%
Playing football	97.42	99.16	96.05*
Hunting	97.42	97.48	97.37
Fishing	92.99	95.80	90.79*
Playing pool or billiards	90.04	94.12	86.84*
Playing basketball	76.75	85.71	69.74*
Woodworking, carving, etc.	76.38	72.27	79.61*
Attending sports events as a spectator	74.91	84.87	67.11*
Rafting	70.11	77.31	64.47*
Archery	69.74	64.71	73.68*
Playing checkers or chess	67.53	71.43	64.47
Playing golf	66.42	73.11	61.18*
Visiting a bar or club	65.68	72.27	60.53*
Canoeing	63.84	71.43	57.89*
Sailing	57.93	68.91	49.34*
Playing cards	57.20	67.23	49.34*
Playing racquetball	54.98	68.07	44.74*
Camping	54.98	66.39	46.05
Hiking	50.92	62.18	42.11*
Working out at a gym	49.82	64.71	38.16*
Reading newspapers	49.08	62.18	38.82*
Playing softball	44.65	52.10	38.82*
Playing backgammon	44.28	43.70	44.74
Collecting such as stamps, etc.	36.16	37.82	34.87
Bowling	31.73	38.66	26.32*
Water skiing	26.94	40.34	16.45*
Playing table-tennis (ping-pong)	22.88	30.25	17.11*
Taking a nap	22.51	29.41	17.11*
Listening to music from tapes, CDs etc.	21.77	26.89	17.76*

*Difference between male and female perceptions are significant at .05, using a chi-square with 1 degree of freedom.

gender role attitude scale) traditional scores were associated with greater sex-typing.

Regression Analyses

Regression results using ordinary least squares are shown in Table 5. Recall, the dependent variable, degree of sex-typing, relates to the number of leisure activities an individual labels as either masculine or feminine. As shown in Table 5, the estimated regression equation is:

$$\text{Degree of Sex-Typing} = 40.99 - 3.54 (\text{Biological Sex}) - 0.09 (\text{Gender-Role Attitudes}) - 1.27 (\text{Gender Identity})$$

As a group, the independent variables explain about 4% of the variance in the number of leisure activities sex-typed ($R^2 = .039$). In the multiple regression setting, only sex contributed significantly ($p < .05$) to the prediction of the sex-typing scores, thus providing further support for H1. However, neither Bem's (H2) nor Spence's (H3) theory were supported by the multiple regression results.

DISCUSSION

One striking find is the significantly higher proportion of males than females who sex-typed leisure activities (as predicted by H1). Males are especially likely to type leisure activities as masculine. In contrast, there is agreement among subjects as to the sex-typing of feminine leisure activities. It appears that men are much more certain as to what leisure activities constitute "their turf." These results parallel the research on sex-role development, which predicts that, starting with early childhood; males are under greater pressure than females to conform to sex-appropriate behavior (Maccoby and Jacklin 1974). Therefore, male conceptions about the sex-appropriateness of leisure activities are more rigid than those of females.

Previous research has found rather consistently that both men and women rate masculine attributes, activities, and occupations as more desirable, important and prestigious than feminine rated attributes, activities and occupations. If women continue to show interest and participation in "masculine" activities, how might this affect the prestige and status of those activities? For example, Fisher (1972) suggests that an increase of women in certain occu-

TABLE 2
Leisure Activities Sex-Typed As Feminine

	Total %	Males %	Females%
Sewing, needlework, knitting, etc.	97.05	97.48	96.71
Weaving	87.82	89.08	86.04
Doing aerobics	87.48	89.08	86.18
Shopping	85.24	87.39	83.55
Talking on the phone	73.43	78.15	69.74*
Writing letters	72.32	70.59	73.68
Attendance at the ballet or dance	70.85	65.55	75.00*
Working with pottery	67.90	73.11	63.82*
Gardening	65.68	68.07	63.82
Cooking	64.94	69.75	61.18*
Attendance at the opera	63.84	59.66	67.11
Participating in ballet, jazz, etc.	59.78	52.94	65.13*
Ice skating	59.78	64.71	55.92*
Walking for pleasure	56.09	58.82	53.92
Playing the piano or organ	55.35	51.26	58.55
Relaxing in the sun	51.29	52.94	50.00
Visiting art museums	50.55	50.42	50.66
Volunteering	50.55	48.74	51.97
Playing with children	49.08	50.42	48.03
Attendance at theater plays	46.86	45.38	48.03
Participating in church activities	43.91	39.50	47.37
Roller skating	43.70	46.61	41.45
Visiting with friends	38.38	30.25	5.92*
Playing badminton	37.64	45.38	31.58*
Painting, drawing, sketching	33.58	37.82	30.26*
Sculpturing	32.84	36.97	29.61
Reading a book for pleasure	32.27	41.18	34.21
Doing crossword puzzles	31.37	40.34	24.34*
Nature study such as bird watching	30.63	41.18	22.37*
Reading magazines	29.89	30.25	29.61
Playing volleyball	23.99	26.89	21.71
Bicycling for pleasure	23.99	21.85	25.66
Sightseeing	22.88	26.05	20.39

*Difference between male and female perceptions are significant at .05, using a chi-square with 1 degree of freedom

pations might serve to reduce the status of those occupations. Further, activities emphasizing achievement, (i.e., games and sports, which are shown here to be identified with the masculine sex) are essential to the development of the masculine role and thus may remain as one of the few areas left to develop masculine identification.

The results of our study do not support Bem's theory, as specified in hypothesis two. The personality measures of masculinity and femininity were not significant predictors of sex-typing. This finding supports those who are disillusioned with a personality approach for predicting behavior. One reason, which has been offered to account for this weak relationship, is based on the validity of the particular personality-measuring instrument (Kassarjian and Sheffet 1991). For example, the instrument employed here (the Personal Attribute Questionnaire-PAQ) does not measure the entire range of dimensions associated with the constructs of masculinity and femininity. Instead, the PAQ focuses on specific aspects; these are highlighted, as aspects of femininity are nurturance and

warmth (which are termed expressive or communal traits). Thus, one possibility for future research is to investigate alternative measures of masculinity-femininity.

Although biological sex explained more of the variance in the respondent's sex-typing of leisure activities, there is some support for Spence's theory. H2 (derived from Spence's theory) is supported by the correlation results (as shown in Table 4). In addition, as specified by Spence's theory, the relationship between personality and leisure behavior is weak. Therefore, for understanding the sex-appropriateness of leisure activities, an attitude approach may offer a better framework than a personality approach.

It may be possible to improve the explanatory power of Spence's theory by refining the measurement procedure. In this vein, Orlofsky, Ramsden and Cohen (1982) have devised a sex-role behavior scale, comprised of male-valued, female-valued and sex-specific items in four interest/behavior areas: recreational and leisure activities, vocational preferences, social interaction and marital behavior. This measure may provide a more accurate

TABLE 3
Leisure Activities Sex-Typed As Either

	Total %	Males %	Females%
Bicycling for pleasure	67.53	68.07	67.11
Swimming	91.14	84.87	96.05*
Watching TV	85.61	78.99	90.79*
Playing tennis	85.24	84.03	86.18
Listening to the radio	84.50	82.35	86.18
Going to the movies	83.76	83.19	84.21
Jogging	79.34	74.79	82.89
Snow skiing	78.23	74.79	80.92*
Renting movies	76.38	70.59	80.92*
Taking pictures (photography)	75.65	70.59	79.61*
Attendance at concerts or musical events	75.28	78.99	72.37*
Reading or studying as stimulated by work	74.91	75.63	74.34
Playing with pets	73.43	68.91	76.97*
Playing a musical instrument	72.32	74.79	70.39
Water skiing	71.22	57.14	82.24*
Listening to music from tapes, CDs, etc.	70.48	66.39	73.68*
Playing table-tennis (ping-pong)	69.74	63.87	74.34
Horseback riding	67.16	54.62	76.97*
Reading magazines	66.05	62.18	69.08*
Bowling	64.58	55.46	71.71*
Sightseeing	64.58	56.30	71.05*
Taking a nap	64.58	57.98	69.74*
Painting, drawing, sketching	64.21	61.34	66.45
Reading a book for pleasure	61.99	57.98	65.13*
Doing crossword puzzles	57.93	51.26	63.16*
Playing volleyball	56.83	48.74	63.16*
Sculpturing	56.46	48.74	63.16*
Playing badminton	55.72	48.74	61.18*
Visiting with friends	55.72	61.34	51.32*
Nature study such as bird watching	55.35	52.10	57.89*
Collecting such as stamps, etc.	55.35	51.26	58.55*
Participating in church activities	54.98	57.98	52.63*
Attendance at theater plays	52.40	54.62	50.66
Reading newspapers	49.82	37.82	59.21*
Playing with children	49.08	46.22	51.32
Visiting art museums	49.08	49.58	48.68
Working out at a gym	48.34	34.45	59.21*
Volunteering	48.34	50.42	46.71
Roller skating	48.15	43.22	51.97*
Hiking	47.97	36.13	57.24*
Playing backgammon	47.23	44.54	49.34
Relaxing in the sun	46.86	44.54	48.68
Playing the piano or organ	43.54	46.22	41.45
Playing racquetball	43.17	31.09	52.63*
Camping	42.80	31.09	51.97*
Playing softball	42.44	35.29	48.03*
Walking for pleasure	42.07	39.50	44.08*
Sailing	41.70	30.25	50.66*
Participating in ballet, jazz, etc.	39.48	47.06	33.55*
Playing cards	36.90	26.89	44.74*
Attendance at the opera	36.16	40.34	32.89*
Canoeing	35.42	26.89	42.11*
Ice skating	35.06	29.41	39.47*
Visiting a bar or club	33.95	26.89	39.47*
Cooking	33.95	28.57	38.16*
Playing golf	33.21	26.05	38.82*
Playing checkers or chess	30.63	25.21	34.87*
Working with pottery	30.26	26.89	32.89*
Rafting	29.52	22.69	34.87*
Attendance at the ballet or dance	29.15	34.45	25.00*
Gardening	28.78	23.53	32.89*
Archery	28.04	31.93	25.00*
Writing letters	26.57	29.41	24.34
Talking on the phone	25.09	21.01	28.29*
Attending sports events	23.62	13.45	31.58*
Playing Basketball	22.14	13.45	28.9

*Difference between male and female perceptions are significant at .05, using a chi-square with 1 degree of freedom

TABLE 4
Correlation Matrix

	Number of Sex-Typed Leisure Activities	Gender-Role Sex	Attitude
Activities			
Sex	-.18		
Gender-Role Attitudes	-.13*	.41*	
Gender Identity	-.07	-.05	.08

*p<.01
n=271

TABLE 5
Regression Analysis For Total Number of Sex-Typed Leisure Activities

	R ²	df	F	p<
	.039	4	3.64	.01

Variable	Parameter Estimates	t-statistics	p<
Intercept	40.99	9.70	0.05
Sex	-3.54	-2.30	0.05
Gender-Role Attitudes	-0.09	-0.97	ns
Gender Identity	-1.27	-0.91	ns

assessment of attitudes, especially with regard to leisure behavior. The strength of biological sex over the gender-related concepts in predicting the sex-typing of leisure activities is apparent. However, one should not interpret from these findings that gender-related concepts are unimportant to the study of leisure behavior. As a caution, it should be noted that our response rate in the secondary sample is rather low (53/200, or 26.5%). This fact may limit the generalizability of our findings.

However, the dynamic changes occurring in traditional sex-role patterns may only now be emerging (Stern 1988); and similarly, such changes in perceptions of leisure activities may only now be appearing. One perception of leisure is based on consumption, which we will further discuss.

Leisure as Consumption

In his winter 2002 column of *ACR News*, Stephen Hoch discusses how "consumption behavior is a more salient aspect of

touristical [sic] pursuits than it is of everyday life" (p. 1). Of course, leisure activities are a part of "everyday life." Yet, they also are emphasized considerably when a consumer is "on vacation" or engaged in "touristical pursuits." Correspondingly, there is a long history in consumer behavior research of trying to understand the nature and meanings of leisure activities. We continue that tradition here by concentrating on the sex-typing of such consumption-laden leisure activities.

When traveling to unknown territory, both men and women find that their activities break out of a ritualistic routine (Hoch 2002). That is, "when we travel to exotic locales, that routine is no longer in place and just getting through the day involves many discrete consumption acts in very unfamiliar territory and we are true amateurs." (Hoch 2002 p.1) As described by Hoch (2002), "consumption behavior is a salient aspect of touristical pursuits." (p. 1) It is important to note that the leisure consumption by tourists is distinct from consumption habits (and other patterns) of natives.

Consumers, when traveling (e.g., on vacation) to an unknown territory with a distinct setting, have unique experiences. For instance, there are differences in preparation (e.g., agenda planning). In many circumstances, natives do not prepare for their leisurely activities (e.g., reading magazines, playing volleyball, bicycling for pleasure). Secondly, tourists often seek out “hotspots” or meaningful experiences on a trip. This may result in differences in how the activity is experienced. Whereas the ESPN Zone may provide an ultimate experimental experience (Sherry 2001) for tourists, Chicago natives nonchalantly accept the consumption center as routine (e.g., as part of everyday life).

After the trip is completed, tourists may treasure the resulting records and artifacts (e.g., scrapbooks, travel journals). In contrast, natives may not feel compelled to record an environment that is frequently encountered. In Hoch’s (2002) travel journal to India, he reports on activities such as purchasing souvenirs, bargaining, visiting temples, learning from natives, and bodysurfing. We report on similar experiences here, including sightseeing, visiting with friends, and water skiing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the relationship between gender schema and sex-typing of leisure (consumption) activities brings competing psychological (e.g., Bem) and sociological (e.g., Spence) theories into a consumer behavior perspective. We find that leisure activities, as a subset of consumption experiences, may be sex-typed—especially by males. As gender roles change in society, these patterns may change.

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Assessing Motivations for Sports Volunteerism

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on recent conceptual models on volunteer motivations developed mainly in social psychology, this study proposes that motivation for sports volunteerism is a multidimensional construct that comprises five distinct components, namely (1) Altruistic Value, (2) Personal Development, (3) Community Concern, (4) Ego Enhancement, and (5) Social Adjustment. A 20-item scale measuring motivations for sports volunteerism was developed using survey data from 935 qualified respondents. Results of confirmatory factor analysis via LISREL software provided reasonably adequate support for the five-factor dimensionality, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the measurement scale.

INTRODUCTION

Every year, millions of volunteers donate substantial amounts of their time and effort to a cause that they care about. The most recent survey on giving and volunteering in the United States shows that 83.9 million Americans, accounting for 44 percent of American adults, engaged in some form of volunteer activities with a formal organization in 2000, with the total number of hours volunteered reached 15.5 billion hours (Independent Sector 2001). According to the latest survey of voluntary work by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001), about 4.4 million Australians, representing 32 percent of the total adult population, provided volunteer services through an organization in 2000. Moreover, there is ample evidence that volunteerism is a global phenomenon that can be found in many other parts of the world (Curtis, Grabb and Baer 1992).

The opportunities for volunteer service are now as broad as the spectrum of human needs. Volunteers can be found in such wide-ranging areas as the arts, youth service, education, health care, welfare, environmental protection, sports and recreation. As a growing and widespread social phenomenon, volunteerism is obviously a topic worthy of researchers' attention. Yet surprisingly, a review of the literature indicates that many prior studies on volunteerism have been primarily descriptive in nature (e.g., Brudney 1993; Perkins 1989; Spacapan and Oskamp 1992). Lack of reliable and valid measures appears to be one major reason for the relative paucity of rigorous empirical research on volunteerism. For example, Cronbach's alpha associated with measures used in one empirical study ranged just from 0.25 to 0.37 (Unger 1991). Among the limited number of empirical studies found in the literature, there were many studies using either just single-item scales to measure volunteer motivations or exploratory factor analysis to assess the motivational dimensionality underlying volunteerism (e.g., Andrew 1996; Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam 1998; Lysack and Krefling 1993; Phillips 1982).

However, exploratory factor analysis without a sound conceptual foundation and the use of single-item measures have long been shown to be inadequate in construct validation and theory testing (e.g., Churchill 1979; Gerbing and Anderson 1988; Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). The development of any scientific theory is virtually impossible without accurate and reliable measurement of theoretical constructs. Using confirmatory factor analysis via LISREL (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1993), the present research attempts to develop a psychometrically sound multi-item scale to measure motivations for sports volunteerism. Data for the main study were collected from prospective volunteers for the Sydney

2000 Olympic Games. As little research has been done in the area of volunteer activity for sporting events, this study draws on the conceptual models on volunteer motivations developed mainly in social psychology.

The remainder of this paper is organized into five sections. The first section reviews the relevant literature on volunteer motivations. The second section discusses the proposed five motivations for sports volunteerism. The third section outlines the research methodology, while the fourth section reports study results. The paper concludes with a discussion of research findings and suggestions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite recent advances in research on volunteer motivations, there is still considerable debate about the underlying structure or dimensionality of volunteer motivations. Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) argue that motivation to volunteer is a unidimensional construct. Smith (1981) proposes a two-dimensional structure consisting of altruistic and egoistic motives (see also Phillips 1982).

Using content analysis, Morrow-Howell and Mui (1989) identified three major categories of volunteer motivations: (1) Altruistic, (2) Material, and (3) Social. As the name implies, altruistic motives pertain to intangible rewards that are intrinsic to the volunteering act itself, namely satisfactions resulted from feeling that one has helped someone else. Material motives, in contrast, are concerned with tangible rewards such as collecting memorabilia, strengthening one's résumé, and developing one's career. Finally, social motives refer to individual satisfactions with rewards of interpersonal interactions. In a study of motivations for participating in a recreation-related voluntary association, Caldwell and Andereck (1994) described three categories of motivations for volunteering: (1) Purposive, (2) Material, and (3) Solidary. Their scheme bears a strong resemblance to that of Morrow-Howell and Mui (1989). Purposive motives relate to doing something useful to society. Material motives pertain to tangible rewards such as learning job-related skills. Solidary motives are concerned with social interaction, group identification, and networking.

In their program of research on AIDS volunteers, Omoto and Snyder (1995) found that five specific motivations for volunteer work could be consistently identified. They defined these motivations as (1) Values, (2) Understanding, (3) Personal Development, (4) Community Concern, and (5) Esteem Enhancement. Values pertain to the underlying beliefs held by a person that one should make altruistic and humanitarian contributions to society. Understanding reflects the fact that volunteering may serve to satisfy a person's intellectual curiosity about other people and the problems that they face. Personal development focuses on issues of personal growth and the opportunity to make friends and gain new skills. Community concern reflects people's sense of obligation to or concern about their community (see also Omoto and Snyder 2002). Finally, Esteem enhancement encompasses motivations that deal with finding ways to cope with guilt over being more fortunate than others.

Similarly, Clary and her associates (1994) identified five motivation factors that may affect intention to volunteer. They include (1) Knowledge, (2) Social Adjustment, (3) Value Expression, (4) Ego Protection, and (5) Utilitarian Concern. Four of the above five motivations, namely Knowledge, Value Expression,

Ego Protection, and Utilitarian Concern, correspond to Omoto and Snyder's (1995) Understanding, Values, Esteem Enhancement, and Personal Development motivations respectively. More recently, Clary and her associates (1998) identified a set of six motivations, which they claim to be of generic relevance to volunteerism. The set of six generic motivations includes (1) Values, (2) Understanding, (3) Social, (4) Career, (5) Protective, and (6) Enhancement.

FIVE MOTIVATIONS FOR SPORTS VOLUNTEERISM

Drawing on the various conceptual models on volunteer motivations reviewed in the preceding section, this section examines five salient motivations considered most relevant to sports volunteers: (1) Altruistic Value, (2) Personal Development, (3) Community Concern, (4) Ego Enhancement, and (5) Social Adjustment. There are two major reasons for adopting this multi-dimensional structure or conceptualization of volunteer motivations. First, previous evidence to support the unidimensional structure was rather weak. Although acknowledging the existence of multiple motives for volunteering, Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) decided on the unidimensional structure based primarily on the results of an exploratory factor analysis. In their factor analysis of 28 potential motivation items culled from extant literature, only the first factor, made up of 22 items, turned out to have acceptable level of reliability. No follow-up confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Such an exploratory and data-driven approach is widely considered inadequate in construct validation (e.g., Churchill 1979; Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). This is evidenced by the low factor loadings (ranged from 0.309 to 0.650) and the apparent lack of face validity with some of the scale items. For instance, items measuring social motivation, such as "opportunity for relationships," were lumped together with altruistic motives, such as "it creates a better society," and egoistic motives, such as "excellent educational experience."

Second, the overwhelming majority of prior studies have suggested that motivation to volunteer is a multidimensional construct (see Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen 1991 for a comprehensive review of various motives for volunteerism). Recent studies on volunteerism (e.g., Clary et al. 1998; Omoto and Snyder 1995, 2002) have provided not only convincing arguments for developing conceptually distinct motivation dimensions, but also compelling empirical evidence in support of the multidimensional structure. Unlike most of earlier studies that relied on just content analysis and exploratory factor analysis (e.g., Morrow-Howell and Mui 1989), recent studies have incorporated new developments in structural equation modeling (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1993) and employed the state-of-the-art techniques for scale development and construct validation (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). From the methodological point of view, recent studies are much more rigorous than most earlier studies on volunteerism. Therefore, the present research used these recent empirical studies as the point of departure to study motivations for sports volunteerism.

Altruistic Value

Volunteerism, by its very nature, is prosocial and altruistic. Altruistic value represents a person's intrinsic beliefs in helping others and contributing to society. A person with altruistic value tends to think about the welfare of other people, to feel empathy for them, and to act in a way that benefits them. Volunteering for a worthy cause provides people with an opportunity to express their humanitarian concerns and translate their deeply held values into actions. Prior research on volunteerism suggests that intention to volunteer is positively related to altruistic value and volunteers

often choose their voluntary acts without expecting a complete *quid pro quo* (Piliavin and Charng 1990; Unger 1991).

Personal Development

Personal development refers to a volunteer's desire to receive self-oriented benefits pertaining to personal growth and learning of new skills. Volunteers seeking personal development value not only the chance to gain new knowledge and experience but also the opportunity to challenge themselves and test their existing skills and abilities. The review of literature on volunteerism indicates that there are egoistic as well as altruistic motivations for volunteering (e.g., Phillips 1982; Smith 1981). Personal development represents one important aspect of egoistic motivations. Volunteerism provides people with the opportunity to learn job-related skills and allows those who are not participating in the job market to acquire or maintain employment skills. This is consistent with Becker's (1964) theory of human capital investment. Human capital investments are those activities that enhance labor market value. Such activities improve a person's skills, knowledge, and mental health.

Community Concern

Community concern reflects people's sense of obligation to and/or involvement with their communities (Omoto and Snyder 2002). At a time of shrinking government funding and rising public demand, more and more social service organizations rely on volunteers to help feed the hungry, house the homeless, and put the unemployed back to work. Community leaders are urging their members to pitch in to strengthen and improve their communities. As a community service, volunteerism is regarded as an integral part of civil society. Bonjean, Markham, and Macken (1994) found community involvement to be an important dimension of self-expression in volunteer organizations.

Ego Enhancement

Ego enhancement encompasses motivations that deal with positive strivings of the ego (Clary et al. 1998). Research on mood and helping behavior suggests that people use helping as a means of maintaining or enhancing positive feelings about themselves (e.g., Carlson, Charlin, and Miller 1988). Feeling good about oneself can be a powerful motivator of volunteerism. For example, Clary and her colleagues (1998) found ego enhancement to be significantly related to satisfaction with volunteering and intentions to volunteer. To help with the staging of the Olympic Games is a once in a lifetime experience for most people. Volunteering for an international sporting event such as the Olympic Games can thus be very exciting and would instill pride and self-esteem in sports volunteers.

Social Adjustment

Social adjustment reflects motivations regarding relationships with other people. Volunteer work is an activity in which a person can participate with his or her friends and engage in activities viewed favorably by important others (Clary et al. 1994, 1998). Past research has provided consistent evidence that people consider perceived social expectations when they form behavior intentions. Harrison (1995) found subjective norm to be positively related to intention to volunteer in a homeless shelter. Fisher and Ackerman (1998) used a social norm perspective to examine the effects of recognition and group need on volunteerism. Their experimental results showed that group members would volunteer when the group need is high and recognition is promised. Clary and her colleagues (1998) found social adjustment to be significantly related to satisfaction with volunteering and intentions to volunteer.

TABLE 1
Results of Exploratory Factor and Reliability Analyses

Measurement Item (<i>m</i> =scale mean; <i>sd</i> =standard deviation; α =Cronbach's alpha)	Rotated Factor Loading	Item to Total Correlation
(1). Altruistic Value (<i>m</i>=4.52; <i>sd</i>=1.33; α=0.82)		
I have an obligation to help others.	0.749	0.53
I volunteer because of my personal values and beliefs.	0.722	0.66
I volunteer because I enjoy helping other people.	0.686	0.68
Because I consider myself to be a person who gets involved.	0.684	0.67
(2). Personal Development (<i>m</i>=4.57; <i>sd</i>=1.46; α=0.86)		
To challenge myself and test my skills.	0.813	0.73
To learn more about other people and cultures.	0.764	0.66
To get to know people interested in the same things as I am.	0.749	0.68
To gain experience.	0.712	0.66
To share my knowledge and skills with others.	0.659	0.69
(3). Community Concern (<i>m</i>=5.63; <i>sd</i>=1.07; α=0.79)		
Volunteering does something good for the community.	0.770	0.61
Volunteers make a valuable contribution to the community.	0.732	0.58
Volunteering is a community service.	0.701	0.50
We should promote volunteerism for the good of society.	0.692	0.60
People should be willing to donate time to help others.	0.665	0.57
(4). Ego Enhancement (<i>m</i>=4.89; <i>sd</i>=1.50; α=0.79)		
I would enjoy being part of the occasion.	0.769	0.69
It would just be fun.	0.731	0.62
It would make me feel good.	0.613	0.58
(5). Social Adjustment (<i>m</i>=4.90; <i>sd</i>=1.32; α=0.80)		
People at my job/school would approve of my volunteering.	0.856	0.78
People who are close to me would support me to volunteer.	0.776	0.57
My family members would encourage me to volunteer.	0.761	0.58

METHOD

Data Collection

Data for the study were collected from people aged 18 or over who were living in the metropolitan area of Sydney, Australia. A quota sampling technique was adopted to obtain a reasonably representative sample from both males and females and across four age brackets: 18 to 34, 35 to 49, 50 to 64, and 65 or over. The data collection method involved the use of personal interviews with a self-administered questionnaire. The fieldwork was undertaken by 170 undergraduate students from a major university in Sydney as part of their course work for a marketing research subject. The questionnaire used in the survey had previously been pretested using a convenience sample of 82 Sydney residents. Several items were removed because of low reliability. A number of minor wording and layout changes were also made as a result of this process. Of the total number of 1020 questionnaires distributed for completion, 935 usable ones were obtained. The sample is balanced across gender with 49% males and 51% females.

Measure Development

All constructs of interest were measured with multiple items. These multi-item measures were developed following the recommended psychometric scale development procedures (e.g., Churchill 1979; Gerbing and Anderson 1988; Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). Based on the definitions of the constructs, items were generated from previous measures found in the relevant literature (e.g., Clary et al. 1994; Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen 1991; Harrison 1995; Omoto

and Snyder 1995) and from interviews with past volunteers. In addition to traditional assessment methods such as exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's coefficient alpha, and item-to-total correlation, the present study assessed psychometric properties of the final measures by means of confirmatory factor analysis procedures using LISREL (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1993).

Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement on a 7-point Likert type scale (ranging from 1 being "strongly disagree" to 7 being "strongly agree") with statements regarding the five dimensions of motivations for sports volunteerism: (1) Altruistic Value, (2) Personal Development, (3) Community Concern, (4) Ego Enhancement, and (5) Social Adjustment.

RESULTS

As described in the preceding section, items derived from conceptualizations of the five proposed dimensions were first analyzed with traditional scale assessment methods. They included exploratory factor analysis (principal components with varimax rotation), Cronbach's coefficient alpha, and item-to-total correlation analyses. Through these exploratory analyses, unreliable and ambiguous items (i.e., items that loaded on multiple constructs or had low item-to-total correlations) were identified and removed during the pretest. As shown in Table 1, this process resulted in a 20-item instrument measuring the five motivational dimensions for sports volunteerism.

To help assess the dimensionality and internal consistency of the measure, the 20-item motivation scale for sports volunteerism was subjected to exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis

TABLE 2
Results of Five-Factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model Fit Statistics	
Chi-square: χ^2	773.26
Degree of freedom	160
p-value	0.000
GFI (goodness-of-fit index)	0.92
AGFI (adjusted goodness-of-fit index)	0.90
TLI (Tucker and Lewis index)	0.91
CFI (comparative fit index)	0.93
RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation)	0.06
Construct Reliability	
CR for Altruistic Value	0.82
CR for Personal Development	0.86
CR for Community Concern	0.79
CR for Ego Enhancement	0.79
CR for Social Adjustment	0.82
Average Variance Extracted	
AVE for Altruistic Value	0.53
AVE for Personal Development	0.56
AVE for Community Concern	0.45
AVE for Ego Enhancement	0.56
AVE for Social Adjustment	0.62
Maximum ϕ^2	0.49

using the data of the main study. Kaiser's rule (eigenvalue larger than one) was used to determine the number of factors to extract. The results are summarized in Table 1. Examination of the exploratory factor analysis results in Table 1 indicates that the 20-item motivation scale yielded five factors. All the items were loaded on hypothesized factors with very low cross-loadings and the factor loadings were all above 0.60. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value was high (0.90), indicating that all the items in the motivation scale appear to be well developed. Examination of the reliability analysis results in Table 1 shows that Cronbach's coefficient alpha values ranged from 0.79 to 0.86 and the item-to-total correlations were all above the recommended value of 0.5 (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). These results suggest that the five motivation subscales for sports volunteerism were reliable measures.

To further examine the measurement model of the motivations for sports volunteerism, the 20 motivational items were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis via LISREL (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1993). The five-factor model representing the hypothesized correlated five-dimension structure was estimated for purposes of assessing overall model fit, construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Gerbing and Anderson 1988). Table 2 summarizes the confirmatory factor analysis results.

As shown in Table 2, the hypothesized five-factor measurement model representing the five motivations for sports volunteerism appears to fit the data reasonably well ($\chi^2(160)=773.26$; $p<0.01$, $GFI=0.92$, $AGFI=0.90$, $TLI=0.91$, $CFI=0.93$, and $RMSEA=0.06$). Although the chi-square statistic was statistically significant ($\chi^2(160)=773.26$; $p<.01$), this is not unusual given the large sample size in this study and the large number of items needed to measure

the five motivations for sports volunteerism (Bollen 1989). Under these circumstances, absolute fit measures such as the chi-square statistic are less useful than incremental fit measures such as the Tucker and Lewis index (TLI) and Bentler's comparative fit index (CFI). The high values of TLI and CFI as well as GFI and AGFI (0.90 or greater) and the low value of the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA, less than 0.08) all indicate a reasonably good level of overall model fit.

To further assess the dimensionality of the 20-item scale measuring the five motivations for sports volunteerism, a series of tests of the nested models were conducted, which comprised the null model, one-factor model, two-factor model, three-factor model, four-factor model, and five-factor model. The factor loading matrix specification in LISREL for one- to five-factor models comes from the results of exploratory factor analysis using principal components extraction method and varimax rotation. Instead of using Kaiser's rule (eigenvalue larger than one) to determine the number of factors to extract, the program was told to extract one, two, three, four, and five factors, respectively. Table 3 provides the test results of the nested models.

As can be seen from Table 3, model fit improves from the null model to the five-factor model (All chi-square changes are significant, $p<0.01$). And more important, among the six measurement models tested, the five-factor model exhibits the best fit in terms of GFI, AGFI, TLI, CFI, and RMSEA. These findings thus lend further support to the five-factor structure of the 20-item motivation scale for sports volunteerism.

Evidence of internal consistency or scale reliability in confirmatory factor analysis is provided by construct reliability (CR). As shown in Table 2, CR estimates for the five motivations ranged

TABLE 3
Tests of Nested Measurement Models

Model	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	p-value	GFI	AGFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Null model	8459.45	190	n/a	N/a	0.32	0.25	n/a	n/a	0.22
1-factor	3211.69	170	5247.76	0.000	0.68	0.61	0.59	0.63	0.14
2-factor	2191.96	169	1019.73	0.000	0.78	0.72	0.73	0.76	0.11
3-factor	1482.40	167	709.56	0.000	0.84	0.79	0.82	0.84	0.09
4-factor	1097.54	164	384.86	0.000	0.89	0.86	0.87	0.89	0.08
5-factor	773.26	160	324.28	0.000	0.92	0.90	0.91	0.93	0.06

from 0.79 to 0.86. Consistent with those of Cronbach's coefficient alpha reported earlier, these results suggest that the five motivation subscales for sports volunteerism possess adequate reliabilities.

After assessing dimensionality and reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity are examined. Two approaches were used to assess convergent validity. The first one recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) is to examine whether factor loading for each indicator is statistically significant. Since t-test shows that factor loadings for all the indicators were highly significant ($p < 0.001$), the motivation scale for sports volunteerism appear to have convergent validity. Fornell and Larcker (1981) proposed a more stringent test of convergent validity. Their approach calls for the calculation of a statistic known as average variance extracted (AVE). AVE estimates of 0.5 or above indicate convergent validity. As shown in Table 2, AVE estimates for all the dimensions were above 0.5, with the exception of community concern, whose AVE estimate was 0.45, slightly lower than the recommended cut-off value of 0.5. These results indicate that the motivation scale for sports volunteerism exhibited reasonably adequate convergent validity.

There are also two approaches that can be used to assess discriminant validity. The first approach was proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). They suggested that discriminant validity should be assessed by chi-square differences test through putting equality constraints, one at a time, in the factor variance-covariance matrix. In the current study, discriminant validity is established if the chi-square fit of the five-factor model is better than the fit of all possible combinations of four-factor models. In all of the ten necessary comparisons, the overall fit of the model was significantly diminished by constraining the factor correlation to unity. The chi-square difference values ranged from 312.91 to 1100.94, far above the critical value of 18.47 ($df=4$) at the significance level of 0.001. These results thus indicate discriminant validity for the five-factor measurement model.

Fornell and Larcker (1981) described an alternative approach to the assessment of discriminant validity. According to them, for any pair of constructs to demonstrate discriminant validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct should be greater than the squared factor structural coefficient (ϕ^2 derived from LISREL) between the pair. The squared structural coefficients ranged from 0.09 to 0.49. As shown in Table 2, all the AVE estimates were greater than the squared structural coefficients, indicating again that the motivation scale for sports volunteerism seemed to have adequate discriminant validity.

Overall, the findings reported so far have provided reasonably strong evidence in support of the five-dimension structure, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity associated with the 20-item motivation scale for sports volunteerism.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Every day around the world, countless volunteers from all walks of life share their time, skill, and energy to help those in need. Given the growing emphasis on volunteerism in both nonprofit and business organizations, it is important to understand and assess the motivations underlying volunteerism. By identifying such motivations, volunteer organizations can design effective programs to recruit prospective volunteers and retain their existing volunteer labor force. However, a review of the extant literature indicates that very few studies have systematically evaluated the factors that motivate people to participate in volunteer programs. Lack of reliable and valid scales to measure motivations for volunteerism appears to be one major reason for the relative paucity of rigorous empirical research on volunteerism.

This research represents one of only a few empirical examinations of the motivational dimensionality underlying sports volunteerism. It offers a conceptualization and a multi-item measure of motivations for sports volunteerism. Drawing mainly on recent conceptual models on volunteer motivations (e.g., Clary et al. 1998; Omoto and Snyder 1995, 2002), the present research proposes that motivation to volunteer in major sporting events is a multidimensional construct that comprises five distinct components, namely (1) Altruistic Value, (2) Personal Development, (3) Community Concern, (4) Ego Enhancement, and (5) Social Adjustment. Results of confirmatory factor analysis via LISREL provided support for the overall measurement model, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity associated with the scale for sports volunteerism.

Results of the study highlight the need for researchers to examine measures of motivations for volunteerism in a more rigorous manner. Structural equation modeling, as demonstrated in the current research, provides an appropriate way of assessing multi-item measurement scales. This research offers a point of departure for future research on sports volunteerism. Further refinements in both conceptualization and measurement are both possible and desirable. Although the current research has developed a multidimensional scale to measure motivations for sports volunteering, many of the items are general in nature and could be adapted to measure motivations for volunteering in other domains. Researchers in the future could also examine the structural relationships among motivations for volunteerism, their antecedents, and outcomes in various research settings.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

It Could Happen to Me: Risk Estimates and the Positivity/Negativity Bias

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Much of consumer behavior involves implicit or explicit risk estimates. For example, the decision to drive instead of fly may involve estimates of relative safety, and getting a mammogram may involve estimates about the probability of developing breast cancer. In an effort to change consumers' risk estimates and behavior marketers often provide consumers with base-rate information. For example, sellers of credit card reports often cite the number of victims of credit card fraud and sellers of disability insurance cite the number of people who are temporarily disabled during their lives.

At the same time, research suggests that consumers are often poor estimators of risk (Slovic, Fischhoff and Lichtenstein 1980) and generally overestimate the probability of good things and underestimate the probability of bad things happening to them (Weinstein 1980). Other research has shown that consumers often fail to incorporate base-rate information in making estimates (Tversky and Kahneman 1998) and that framing can lead to dramatic differences in how base-rates are incorporated into preferences (Tversky and Kahneman 1981). This special session addressed these issues by 1) examining factors that lead consumers to under or overestimate risk for themselves and others in the population, 2) examining how actual frequencies are incorporated in new estimates, 3) examining the link between estimates, preferences and behavior.

In the first paper of the session, Ying-Ching (Michelle) Lin presented her work with Priya Raghurir and Chien-Huang Lin that seeks to explain the "self-positivity" (self-negativity) bias in risk estimates that leads to the under- (over-) estimation of risk relative to others. By looking at risk estimates for oneself versus others, for positive versus negative, and for controllable versus uncontrollable events, the authors are able to demonstrate that self-positivity is a strategic device to maintain or enhance self esteem, rather than a self-serving bias.

In the second paper, Punam Keller presented work with Isaac Lipkus that studies how providing absolute versus relative risk information affects women's estimates for developing breast cancer as well as their intentions to undergo early-detection screening (mammograms). The authors find that women who are provided only data on their own risk of breast cancer give more accurate self-estimates than those who are provided with data for themselves and women who are at lowest risk. Contrary to many theories of health behavior, lowering risk estimates does not lower intentions to get mammograms.

In the third paper, Nicholas Lurie and Michael Ranney presented a series of studies that show that asking consumers to make estimates before indicating preferences can lead to preferences that are in some cases closer to, and other cases farther away from, preferences based on actual data, or preferences elicited before estimates. Importantly, making estimates can limit preference change in the face of actual data. Feedback on the mortality rates of one disease can improve estimates for other diseases and bring consumers closer to what seem to be their true preferences.

After the three papers were presented, Geeta Menon moderated a discussion between the participants and audience that explored connections between the papers, the accuracy of risk estimates, ways to improve estimates and the link between estimates and behavior.

"Feeling Better or Staying Miserable: Why Self-Positivity?"

Chien-Huang Lin, National Central University, Taiwan

Ying-Ching Lin, National Chi Nan University, Taiwan

Priya Raghurir, University of California at Berkeley

Consumers' decisions to purchase products or services are frequently a function of the perceived risks of the product or service's performance. For example, the likelihood of purchasing a specific brand of car, appliance, software or service is a function of the perceived risk of the product or service being able to perform satisfactorily and not break down. In other domains, purchase probabilities may be contingent on perceptions of the likelihood of an event occurring (e.g., purchasing a lottery ticket, a product with a sweepstake promotion etc.). In yet other contexts, consumers' health-related behaviors are contingent on their perceptions of the risk of contracting a specific disease, in absolute terms or relative to the average person. However, a fairly robust finding is that individuals' believe that they are less at risk than an "average" other person for a negative event, (i.e., the "self-positivity" bias; Perloff and Fetzer 1986), and more likely to experience a positive one (i.e., show "unrealistic optimism," Weinstein 1980). This systematic bias can lead to non-optimal purchases, decisions, and behaviors. Consumer researchers are increasingly examining this issue in contexts ranging from AIDS (Raghurir and Menon 1998) and Hepatitis C (Menon, Block and Ramanathan 2002) to depression (Keller, Lipkus, and Rimer 2002) and breast cancer (Luce and Kahn 1999), and have implicated reducing self-positivity as a route to encourage preventative behavior. Accordingly, an important consumer welfare goal is to reduce the self-positivity bias.

This paper examines the underlying reasons behind self-positivity to better understand how to reduce and eliminate the bias. We propose that self-positivity may be due to three different reasons: maintaining or enhancing self-esteem, reducing anxiety associated with the uncertainty about future life outcomes, or an overall desire to feel happy using a denial mechanism. We suggest that examining the moderating effect of perceived controllability of an event, the use of base-rates in self-estimates, and the manner in which optimists and pessimists estimate likelihood can assist in disentangling which of these three routes lead to self-positivity. These variables can also explain inconsistent effects regarding the presence of self-positivity across a range of events, the direction and presence of self-positivity for different populations (e.g., depressives), and the differential resilience of the bias to base-rate information.

If the underlying mechanism for self-positivity is to feel happy, then beliefs should always reflect optimism, irrespective of the perceived controllability of the behavior. If it is an anxiety-reduction mechanism, then self-positivity should be greater when events are more uncertain or less controllable. However, if self-positivity is due to self-esteem maintenance, then it should be lower for controllable events. This is because people can attribute a lower risk of a negative event to their own actions, so the strategic belief that they are less at risk than others should improve their self-esteem.

Examining the manner in which base-rate information is used to update self-estimates also illuminates the reason behind self-positivity. If it is due to uncertainty reduction, then base-rates should always be used. If self-positivity is due to a wish to feel happy, then pessimists should use base-rates to update their self-

estimates, while optimists should not update. However, if it is due to self-esteem maintenance, optimists and pessimists may react differently to base-rate information. Optimists, who have high self-esteem and demonstrate self-positivity, should be less likely to update their self-estimates overall. When they do, they should be more likely to update their estimates for more (versus less) controllable events. However, pessimists, with a pattern of self-negativity and low self-esteem, should update their estimates for events irrespective of the perceived controllability of the event.

We argue that self-judgments are constructed so as to maintain self-esteem. To test this, we examine the attenuating effects of: (i) providing reference points to act as “base-rates” and (ii) decreasing the perceived event’s controllability on the self-positivity bias. Three studies programmatically examine this idea.

Study 1 shows the attenuating effect of controllability perceptions and the presence of base-rate information in the domain of the disease: cancer. Although there are a number of ways an individual can reduce the risk of cancer, the relationship of the disease to individual behaviors, is not entirely within individual control—many individuals who do not engage in “high risk” activity, are still diagnosed with cancer. We show that increasing perceptions of the lack of control over contracting cancer, along with base-rate information about the incidence of cancer eliminates the self-positivity bias.

Studies 2 and 3 extend the investigation beyond the domain of cancer. We argue that self-positivity will be exacerbated (i) for conditions where it is easier to, and (ii) for individuals who would like to, maintain or enhance self-esteem. Study 2 replicates the results of Study 1, using different manipulations: measuring controllability of different behaviors rather than manipulating it, and extending the domain to include positive events. Results show that when events are perceived to be within an individual’s control, they perceive themselves as less at risk for a negative event and more likely to enjoy a positive event. When events are perceived to be outside of the individual’s control, base-rate information attenuates the self-positivity effect. However, when events are perceived to be controllable, then the presence of base-rates exacerbates the self-positivity bias: self-estimates contrast away from the provided base-rate.

Study 3 examines why self-estimates reflect a contrast away from base-rate information for controllable events. It shows that the above effects are contingent on individuals’ level of optimism: optimists are more likely to update self-estimates when events are less controllable. Pessimists demonstrate self-negativity irrespective of the perceived controllability of the event. They assimilate base-rate information into self-estimates irrespective of the perceived controllability of the event. However, this assimilation is not always adequate, leading to a reduction, but not an elimination of a self-negativity effect. The combination of a reduction of self-negativity for pessimists and no change in self-positivity for optimists for controllable behaviors, leads in aggregate to self-estimates showing a contrast away from base-rates, as found in Study 2.

“Risk Information: Truth and Consequences”

Punam Anand Keller, Dartmouth College

Isaac M. Lipkus, Duke University Medical Center

In general, people tend to think that bad things happen to other people and not to themselves. This has been referred to as the optimistic bias (Weinstein 1980). However, the situation seems to be quite different for breast cancer. Women consistently and quite dramatically overestimate their chances of getting breast cancer (Lerman et al. 1995). It is possible that this tendency to overestimate

risk has led to excessive worries, may deter breast cancer screening or, conversely, lead to excessive screening (Epstein et al. 1997; McCaul et al. 1996).

So how are medical professionals to communicate breast cancer risk information in a way that increases the accuracy of risk perceptions? Giving women relative risk information (i.e., self vs. others), in addition to their absolute risk, might help them understand their own risks. Indeed, adding a reference point to help people judge whether a risk is considered low, average, or high, has been shown to affect risk perceptions (Smith, Desvovages and Payne 1995).

The literature is mixed on whether people will rely on objective or social comparison information when both are available. According to Festinger’s (1954) classic article on social comparison processes, people prefer to use objective information to evaluate their opinions and abilities and only rely on others when objective information is not available. By contrast, Klein (1997) indicates that social comparison information is more important than objective information. Across three studies, comparative risk information had more impact on self-evaluation and emotional judgments than objective risk information.

How should the addition of relative risk to absolute risk information affect women’s perceived risk of breast cancer? Given that most women overestimate their risk of breast cancer, they should lower their risk estimates if they are only given their absolute risk of breast cancer. However, assuming that people are sensitive to relative risk information, in addition to absolute risk information, having women compare their risk with the risk of others should affect both perceived risk and accuracy. Specifically, if women are constrained to compare their risk with a woman at lowest risk, they should be less inclined to lower their perceived risk, leading to diminished accuracy. This format, as other studies have suggested (Klein and Kunda 1993), curtails women’s tendencies to sustain self-serving social comparisons.

The primary goals of our study were to (a) examine the impact of absolute and relative risk information not only on perceived risk and mammogram screening intentions, but also on emotional responses to getting breast cancer, and (b) assess participants’ evaluations of risk information and attributional accounts for under- or overestimation of risk.

We tested our hypotheses in a sample of women aged 40 and older. In a pre- to post-test design, 121 women were given their 10-year risk of getting breast cancer with or without being given comparative data for women their age and race at lowest risk. Participants were more accurate when they received their own risk without comparison data for women at lowest risk. Women who received only their own risk estimate reported being at lower risk than other women. The majority of women who overestimated their risk after receiving the objective risk information did so because they did not understand the meaning of the numbers and/or because they felt the objective risk information failed to incorporate important factors such as level of exercise. Overall women reported that obtaining their 10-year risk estimate either did not affect or increase their intentions to get a mammogram. These results suggest that giving women their individual risk of getting breast cancer improves accuracy while also enhancing feelings that they are at lower risk than other women. Counter to many theories of health behavior, reducing women’s perceived risk of breast cancer did not lower their intentions to get mammograms. Implications for the communication of breast cancer risk are discussed.

“The Effect of Making Risk Estimates on Consumer Preferences”

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Although much of consumer behavior *implicitly* involves risk estimates (for instance, getting a mammogram implies a certain level of perceived risk of developing breast cancer), it is important to examine the effect of making estimates explicit. Making risk estimates explicit (i.e., by asking consumers to estimate the frequency of death from heart disease), may have important implications for behavior. For example, making estimates may lead consumers to be more likely to use data in developing preferences, making choices, or making them think more globally about risk. If consumers' risk estimates are accurate, they may lead to preferences that are closer to those consumers provide when given actual risk data (e.g., the number of women that die from heart disease). On the other hand, if consumers' estimates are inaccurate, asking for estimates prior to preferences may bias preferences away from those provided under full information. Another important issue regards how making estimates affects the integration of data. Making estimates may serve to anchor consumers' initial preferences and therefore make them less likely to change their preferences later in the presence of actual data. If estimates are an important determinant of preferences, then to what extent can providing consumers with risk data for related topics (information seeds) improve consumers' risk estimates and bring consumers closer to what seem to be their true preferences?

This paper presents the results of a series of studies that examine the effect of making estimates on preferences and vice versa. Using several variations of the EPIC method (Ranney et al., 2001), in which participants are asked to estimate (E), form preferences (P), integrate (I) actual data, and change (C) their preferences, we examine the relationship between estimates and preferences for allocating funds to research on pairs of various leading causes of death. Disease pairs included lung cancer versus skin cancer, breast cancer versus heart disease, stroke versus diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease versus Parkinson's disease. In addition to estimating frequencies of death, participants were asked to provide non-surprise intervals and confidence ratings for these intervals. Feedback consisted of actual mortality data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

We find that estimated frequencies are often far from actual frequencies and that the accuracy of estimates and non-surprise intervals are not reflective of self-reported familiarity with a disease, whether a friend or family member has the disease, or confidence in non-surprise intervals. More importantly, we find that, relative to eliciting preferences before estimates, or eliciting preferences only in the presence of actual mortality data, eliciting estimates before preferences can bring consumers closer to their post-feedback preferences for research support for some diseases (e.g., lung cancer) but farther away for other diseases (e.g., breast cancer). Those for whom actual frequencies fall outside non-surprise intervals are more likely to change their preferences after receiving feedback. At the same time, we find that initial preferences serve as anchors that limit the updating of preferences in the face of actual data and that making estimates can change the locations of these anchors. Interestingly, although there is high variance in the extent to which people who have a disease are seen as responsible for having their condition (e.g., lung cancer versus Alzheimer's) perceived “culpability” only occasionally seems to affect preferences.

In a second study, we find that providing information “seeds” (cf., Friedman and Brown 2000), in which participants are asked to

make estimates and then receive feedback for a different pair of diseases, improves estimates and moderates the biasing effects of making estimates found in the first study. These results have important public policy implications, since risk estimates often drive resource allocations (e.g., charitable contributions to different organizations). Although consumers seem willing to dramatically change their preferences in the face of actual data, they are still rather unwilling to discard their initial (pre-feedback) preferences. Information seeding is one way to improve estimates and enhance preference useful malleability. Examining other ways to improve consumers' numerical reasoning represents an important step for future research.

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Do The Ones We Love Sometimes Hurt Us The Most: The Role of Relationship Norms on Consumers' Perception of Fairness and Brand Evaluations

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Prior work on fairness perceptions has found that in order to assess overall fairness of an event, people sometimes focus on distribution of the final outcome while at other times they focus on how they are treated by others in their interaction. This distinction between *distributive* fairness and *interactional* fairness can be of particular importance in a brand context since a better understanding of what influences a consumer's perceptions of fairness would go a long way in not just managing consumer complaints but also improving the long-term health of the brand.

Prior work has found that there is a two-way interaction between distributive and interactional fairness (Blodgett, Hill and Tax 1997). In other words, it has been found that issues of interactional fairness become especially relevant when the outcome is perceived to be distributively unfair. Thus, prior work suggests that when faced with a failure of product performance or service delivery, marketers need to take special care about how the consumers are treated by them. This research explores the question of whether the type of relationship that consumers have with a brand, in fact, influences the degree to which this attention to interactional fairness might be relevant. Thus, the primary goal of this work is to use a relationship framework to study differences in consumers' sensitivity to different aspects of fairness, which in turn influences their responses in the face of a negative brand experience.

Two types of consumer-brand relationships are examined—*exchange* relationships in which people provide benefits to others in order to get something back in return; and *communal* relationships in which benefits are given to take care of others' needs and to demonstrate concern for their well being (Clark and Mills 1993). It is hypothesized that, since, consumers in an exchange relationship attend to what they get and what they give, they would be influenced more by issues of distributive fairness. On the other hand, since, communal consumers attend to whether or not they are cared for in the relationship, they would be influenced more by issues of interactional fairness. Thus, a three-way interaction is hypothesized between relationship type, distributive (un)fairness and interactional (un)fairness. In other words, it is expected that consumers would be more sensitive to issues of interactional fairness when facing low rather than high level of distributive fairness, and this effect would be stronger for communal rather than exchange consumers. Further, this research explores the differences in the behavior of communal and exchange consumers as the level of interactional fairness changes.

Experiment 1 uses a scenario-based stimuli to test for a three-way interaction between relationship type, distributive fairness and interactional fairness. The relationship norms were first manipulated by getting the participants to read a description of their interaction with a hypothetical takeaway restaurant. Participants then read a description of a specific interaction—which resulted in different outcomes that were either distributively fair or unfair, and either interactionally fair or unfair. Participants then gave rating on different items that tapped into brand evaluation, quality of relationship and future intentions. Results supported the hypothesis for all three dependent variables. It was found that negative effect of distributive unfairness was mitigated as a result of the interactional fairness and that this effect was stronger for communal relative to exchange consumers. Results of the experiment highlight that communal consumers evaluate the brand better than exchange

consumers when faced with interactional fairness and evaluated the brand much worse than exchange consumers when faced with interactional unfairness. This suggested that the two relationships lead to some different processes that might be insightful to investigate.

Some recent work in organizational behavior suggests that there is threshold number of violations of fairness that must take place before a decision maker rejects a given alternative (Gilliland, Benson, and Schepers 1998). These authors suggest that beyond a threshold number of violations, the situation is judged to be unfair regardless of the number of violations. Given the evidence on the existence of a threshold of rejection, it is reasonable to expect participants to show a threshold of rejection to changes in the level (intensity) of interactional unfairness rather than only to the number of violations. Additionally, given that communal consumers are more sensitive to issues of interactional fairness, one would expect communal consumers to be more likely to have such a threshold of rejection more than exchange-oriented consumers. Experiment 2 tested this hypothesis.

Experiment 2 used a similar manipulation of relationship norms as was used in the first experiment. In this experiment, it was also decided to have four different levels of interactional fairness (poor, low, medium, and high). Thus, it was a 2x4 between subjects design. As before, participants read a description about an interaction with a brand (in this case an audio store), and then gave their response to items that tapped into their perception of brand evaluation, quality of relationship, and future intentions. Results suggest that communal consumers are more likely to show a threshold of rejection (somewhere between high and medium levels of interactional fairness) than exchange consumers. Specifically, results showed that exchange consumers lower their brand evaluations in a more linear fashion with each lower level of interactional fairness. In contrast, communal consumers lower their brand assessment dramatically between high and medium levels, beyond which their response too follows a more linear function.

In addition to being theoretically interesting this research outlines some important implications for marketers who sometimes struggle with handling consumer complaints.

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Group Dynamics of Impulse Buying: An Extended Social Facilitation Perspective

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

While impulsive buying has attracted researchers' attention for more than one and a half centuries (e.g., Mill 1848; Baumeister 2002), most existing theory and research are limited to investigate it at the intrapersonal level. Although the individual level conceptualization of impulse buying is definitely not incorrect, it may be incomplete in that it excludes the potential interpersonal influence at the group level. Given the fact that most consumers shop not alone but with a group of people such as family members or friends, and that a large amount of impulse purchases are decided and made in the presence of friend and/or family groups, it seems rather logic to conceive the potential influence of group situations on one's impulse behavior. More important, according to social facilitation theory in social psychology (Triplett 1897; Zajonc 1965), an individual consumer's learning, motivation, and behavior may be facilitated by the presence of a group of people. In particular, consumers may engage in impulsive buying in a group situation that others are buying for five different reasons; (1) they are facilitated simply due to the mere presence of others, (2) they think others' opinions and behaviors are credible under the informative influence, (3) they may use others' behavior and their purchase as socially approved and desirable in general under the normative influence, (4) they want to compete when others are buying, not missing out on having products that others have, and (5) they may have released the inhibition in buying products they don't need but want to do so, taking others' buying behavior as a reasonable justification. Therefore, this research theorizes that the social presence and interactions with a group of people in shopping may influence the individual's felt impulse and resulting impulsive behavior.

Surprisingly, the academic and trade press has paid less attention to the existence and potential of the group influences on impulse buying beyond the individual level perspective. This research attempts to alleviate this deficiency in this research. An examination of impulse buying at the social group level is desired and important because Rook (1987, p.196) calls for future research on investigating impulse purchase from "a social environment (group versus solo buying) context", after a classical and comprehensive review of impulsive buying concepts. In addition, such an investigation at the group level may in general contribute to the consumer literature in that the existing literature is unbalanced and lacking studies of "groups of consumers such as two-person dyads, families, peer or friendship groups" at the interpersonal level (Bagozzi 2000, p388). Accordingly, this paper is to mainly explore group influences and their implications for individual impulse buying behavior.

Two experiments were conducted to test the influences of group type and group cohesiveness on impulse buying. The results of study 1 with a 2 (group shopping vs. solo shopping) x 2 (family members vs. peer friends) x 2 (high cohesive group vs. low cohesive group) mixed-factorial design support the ideal that group influence may induce more or less impulse buying than solo shopping without group influence. In particular, the more cohesive is the shopping group of peer friends, the more buying impulsiveness and impulsive purchase behavior would be reported. In contrast, the more cohesive is the shopping group of family members, the less buying impulsiveness and impulsive purchase behavior would be recorded. Study 2 used a 2 (high vs. low susceptibility to group influence) x 2 (group shopping vs. solo shopping) x 2 (family

members vs. peer friends) x 2 (high cohesive group vs. low cohesive group) mixed-factorial design. The results support the premise that the interpersonal antecedents' influences on consumer impulsive behaviors are moderated by susceptibility to group influence.

Three potential contributions of this paper are noteworthy. First, it extends the impulse buying literature from the *intrapersonal* trait perspective to *interpersonal* group dynamics perspective. It theorizes that group influence may induce more or less (than solo shopping) impulse buying depending on the cohesiveness of the shopping group and the member type of group (friends or family members). Second, it tests and finds initial evidence of the potential interpersonal antecedents of impulsive buying such as group type and group cohesiveness. Third, it lends some support that the interpersonal antecedent influences may be contingent upon individual traits such as susceptibility to group influence. Thus, both interpersonal antecedents and individual traits are important determinants of impulse buying and, thus, ought to be considered simultaneously in future research on impulse buying behavior.

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When Research Participants Don't Tell It Like It Is: Pinpointing the Effects of Social Desirability Bias Using Self vs. Indirect-Questioning

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Social desirability bias reflects the basic human nature to present oneself in a positive manner to others. Typically, this tendency takes the form of over-reporting opinions and behaviors that are congruent with values deemed socially acceptable and under-reporting those deemed socially undesirable. This bias concerns many behavioral researchers because of its threat to construct validity in measurement construction. However, social desirability bias is not just a problem for scale construction, but it can also present problems as a moderating variable or confounding factor when examining behavior. Since so much consumer behavior research examines the influences of others on attitudes and behaviors, as well as social/symbolic presentation, we would expect consumer research to potentially suffer from the compromising effects of social desirability bias. King and Bruner's (2000) investigation of papers published in top marketing journals from 1980-1997 revealed that only thirteen papers tested social desirability bias as a potential source of error.

Research designs that use a self-report format and measure constructs that have high social influence appear to foster problems with social-desirability bias (Fisher 1993; Fisher and Tellis 1998; Jo 2000; King and Bruner 2000). The use of indirect questioning is believed to lower social desirability bias by asking participants to report from the perspective of another person (Fisher 1993; Fisher and Tellis 1998). The assumption is that participants will project their own opinions and behaviors onto the referent person (Calder and Burnkrant 1977; Grubb and Stern 1971; Haire 1950). Self-report questioning methods, on the other hand, may increase the potential for social desirability bias as the participant seeks to manage the researcher's impression of him or her.

Recently, consumer behavior researchers were called to increase attention to social-desirability bias in design, measure construction, and analysis (Fisher 2000; King and Bruner 2000; Mick 1996). This research contributes to the discussion of the effects of social desirability bias in consumer research by examining the differences in responses between a self-report and an indirect-questioning method in split samples for two different studies of consumer behavior. These studies show the differences in reports that can be attributed to this bias.

The first study examines the influence of other people's opinions in a consumer's post-purchase evaluation and determination of satisfaction and looks at the use of this comparison standard for both expressive and private products. A 2 (questioning method) x 2 (product) between subjects experiment was performed. Each participant received a scenario about a recent purchase of either an expressive or private product and were asked to report on comparison standards used during post-purchase evaluation and satisfaction determination for either "you" (self-report) or "Jordan, a typical college student" (indirect-question). Results indicated significantly higher reporting of the use of other people's opinions by the indirect-question group during both post-purchase evaluation and satisfaction determination. Additionally, participants using an indirect question format rated other people's opinions as a more important comparison standard than did those using a self-report. Third, the difference in reported use of other people's opinions between participants using indirect vs self-report formats showed

strong significance for expressive products, but not for private products.

The second study is an exploratory survey of the effects of social desirability bias in a particular situation, health communication. It examines the ways in which physicians and patients discuss advertised prescription medications, motivations and attitudes behind those discussions, and outcomes of the conversations. It is qualitative in nature, and observes the potential moderating impact of social desirability bias on reported attitudes and behaviors related to patient-physician communication. Social norms typically encourage cooperativeness with those in authority and perceived power, but patients may feel intimidated by their physician. Given the nature of the communication relationship between patient and physician, social desirability may moderate the reported willingness to discuss medications, since patients want to appear cooperative and informed, and thus may self-report a high willingness to interact with their physician, but they may actually be intimidated or anxious.

Additionally, social desirability may play a role in reported attitudes towards persuasive communications (prescription advertising in this study). Research has found that when thinking about prescription drug ads in general, self-reported attitudes towards the ads tend to be rated lower than when a specific advertisement is being evaluated. In terms of social desirability influence, a person rating prescription advertisements in general may feel less compelled to please the researcher with positive evaluations than when evaluating a specific brand ad and may even unconsciously desire to appear unaffected by and unimpressed by this type of advertising (i.e., "I'm not persuaded by these ads, but others are."). Thus, while general attitude measures toward prescription drug ads would seem socially neutral, we might expect that with indirect-questioning, more favorable attitudes towards the ads to be reported.

Like the first study, a split sample was employed in order to observe potential between subjects moderating effects of social desirability bias. Study results supported the hypotheses about the effects of social desirability bias on the reporting of communication about, and attitudes toward, advertising. Participants evaluated themselves as more willing to discuss medications than typical others. Additionally, participants self-reported more moderate attitudes towards prescription drug advertisements than typical others.

The goal of this research was to examine the effects of social desirability bias in consumer research. While most consumer behavior studies examine social desirability bias as a threat to construct validity during measurement development, this research differs in that it considers social desirability bias as a moderator, or confound, in an empirical study explaining attitudes and behaviors. While the information goals of the two studies presented differ, results of both studies exemplify the potential sources of error from social desirability bias in consumer research. Results support that indirect-questioning methods evoke higher responses of socially undesirable behavior (e.g., influence from other persons and advertising) than a self-report. Additionally, the second study illustrated that a self-report question format would show higher reports of socially desirable behavior (e.g., discussions with physicians) than an indirect-question format.

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What is the Relation between Culture and Desirable Responding?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The literature in cross-cultural psychology suggests that collectivists are more likely to engage in deception in order to save face and maintain harmonious relationships with others. In contrast, individualists are portrayed as candid and sincere because individualism encourages people to "be yourself." For example, Trilling (1972) argues that people in individualist cultures are more likely to seek sincerity and authenticity, whereas people in collectivist cultures de-emphasize authenticity. Similarly, Triandis (1995) proposes that honesty in interactions with strangers is a characteristic that is more highly valued by individualists than collectivists.

We argue that people with both types of cultural orientations engage in desirable responding, albeit in distinct ways. Given that individualists exhibit considerable biases in the form of possessing overly positive and unrealistic views of the self, enhancing the positivity of the self-view, and actively seeking information that maintains that inflated self-view (Diener, Diener and Diener, 1996; Heine and Lehman, 1995; Heine, Lehman, Markus and Kitayama, 1999; Taylor and Brown, 1988), we argue that individualists are likely to exhibit self-deceptive enhancement, the tendency to see oneself in a positive light and to give inflated assessment of one's skills and abilities.

On the other hand, given that collectivists are more likely to engage in deception (e.g., Triandis and Suh 2002; Trilling 1972), which in turn has been linked to impression-management motives (e.g., Jacobson, Berger & Millham, 1970; Kashy & DePaulo, 1996; Sengupta, Dahl & Gorn, 2002), we argue that collectivists are more likely than individualists to answer dishonestly in order to present themselves in a socially desirable manner.

Data were collected by administering questionnaires to an ethnically diverse sample of adults residing outside the campus of a major metropolitan area (study 1), and students attending a large Midwestern University (studies 2 and 3). In general, the results supported the above propositions. Findings also indicated that the horizontal dimension of both individualism and collectivism accounts for these relationships. Furthermore, the tendency of collectivists to engage in impression management was mediated by scores measuring their tendency to lie.

Our findings have important implications for researchers using surveys as a method of data collection. As is well known, desirable responding is one of the major causes of response bias and is a major threat to the validity of research findings (Johnson & Van de Vijver, 2002). Our findings suggest that researchers need to account for response bias in data collected across different cultures.

Further, the results of this study likely have important implications for various domains of consumer behavior. For example, our findings suggest that people with collectivistic cultural orientations would be more prone to overstating consumption of goods that help them maintain face or enhance their social standing, such as branded or expensive products. Collectivists may also understate their consumption of undesirable products like cigarettes and alcohol. Similarly, our findings suggest that people with an individualistic orientation and more particularly with a horizontal individualistic orientation may be more likely to exaggerate their skills and prowess in various matters (e.g., financial decision making, consumer judgments, and the like).

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Image Congruence and Attitudes toward Private Brands

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ABSTRACT

Focusing on three types of image congruence surrounding private brands, this study explores their relationships with and effects on attitudes toward private brands. According to results; (1) private brands' images need to be created and maintained as target customers want, (2) product categories similar in image to their stores should be included in private brands, (3) retailers have to improve consumer attitudes toward stores by making their store images similar to consumers' self images, and (4) retailers need to change value-oriented strategies for their private brands with quality-oriented strategies.

Private brands have accounted for a sizable fraction of sales in retailing. For example, private brands have accounted for 13% of US supermarket sales in 1991 and 20% of Canada supermarket sales in 1990 (Hoch and Banerji 1993). There is also a report that private brands are top sellers in 77 categories among 250 product categories sold in the US supermarket (Quelch and Harding 1996).

Popularity of private brands is expected to grow among retailers due to several reasons. First, private brands have a higher gross margin opportunity than national brands (Lewison 1994; Raju, Sethuraman, and Dhar 1995). Although private brands are typically priced 15–30% lower than national brands (Ailawadi, Neslin, and Gedenk 2001; Mason, Mayer, and Ezell 1994), lower marketing costs compensate for the lower prices and allow private brands to enjoy higher overall gross margins than national brands. Second, private brands help retailers to gain control in the channel power struggle between retailers and manufacturers. With private brands as a bargaining tool, retailers can ask national brand manufacturers for better trading terms such as cheaper prices, quicker deliveries, more promotional items, and others. (Ailawadi, Borin, and Farris 1995; Chintagunta, Bonfrer, and Song 2002; Narasimhan and Wilcox 1998). Third, retailers can build distinctive store image with their private brands (Grewal et al. 1998; Richardson, Dick, and Jane 1994; Sayman, Hoch, and Raju 2002). Kenmore and Craftsman are good examples. These two private brands help shape Sears' image of economy and practicality. Fourth, private brands with strong and exclusive image can develop store traffic and loyalty (Corstjens and Lal 2000; Levy and Weitz 2001). Forenza and Hunters Run sold exclusively by The Limited store are powerful magnets for customers of the Limited.

Since the Frank and Boyd's (1965) seminal paper, research on private brands has been performed on various issues. Earlier research on private brands explored socio-psychological and demographic characteristics private brand users have (Coe 1971; Frank and Boyd 1965; Myers 1967) or studied differences between national brands and private brands (Swan 1974). Research on private brands in the 80's turned its focus on behavioral aspects of private brand users (Bellizzi et al. 1981; Cunningham, Hardy, and Imperia 1982). Studies on private brands in more recent years are mostly about factors and conditions related to market performances (Batra and Sinha 2000; Corstjens and Lal 2000; Dhar and Hoch 1997; Hoch and Banerji 1993; Raju, Sethuraman, and Dhar 1995; Richardson, Dick, and Jain 1994), positioning strategies (Ailawadi, Neslin, and Gedenk 2001; Sayman, Hoch, and Raju 2002), channel conflicts (Ailawadi, Borin, and Farris 1995; Narashimhan and Wilcox 1998), effects on retailers' pricing strategy (Chintagunta, Bonfrer, and Song 2002), and so on.

Various images are related with forming attitudes toward brands. For example, symbolic qualities of brands or brand

personalities are major determinants of brand evaluation and purchase. (Hirshman and Holbrook 1982; Solomon 1983). A consumer's self image also has a certain effect on brand evaluation (Grubb and Hupp 1968). Consumers prefer brands identifying with themselves, and their perception of a brand is organized along with their self images. Store image is another important factor in consumer brand evaluation. The image of a brand can be damaged if the brand is associated with a retailer having a less favorable image. For example, if Benetton apparel were sold in K-mart, Benetton would have difficulty in maintaining its high fashion image. Despite such importance, researchers did not have paid due attention to images related with private brands. Images or positioning problems of private brands are generally ignored by marketing literature (Sayman, Hoch, and Raju 2002).

Three types of image congruence particularly draw our attentions in relation with attitudes toward private brands. They are image congruence between a private brand and a consumer's self, image congruence between a store and a product category, and image congruence between a store and a consumer's self. These three types of image congruence are derived from three essential components determining attitudes toward private brands: brands, stores, and consumers. Between brands and consumers, image congruence between a private brand and a consumer's self is derived. Between stores and brands, image congruence between a store and a product category is derived. Between stores and consumers, image congruence between a store and a consumer's self is derived. Focusing on these three types of image congruence, this study tries to find their relationships with and effects on attitudes toward private brands. Along with image congruence, this study also explores roles of attitudes toward stores which are closely related with attitudes toward private brands. Although effects of image congruence have been explored by many researchers (Bellenger, Steinberg, and Stanton 1976; Hirshman and Holbrook 1982; Solomon 1983), they have never been studied under an integrated framework nor the perspective of private brands.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Importance of image in consumer behavior has been well documented (Bellenger, Steinberg, and Stanton 1976; Dobni and Zinkhan 1990). Image provides a critical cue for customer perceptions of products, brands, salespeople, and stores. Through image, consumers perceive a brand as a symbol and form quick summary information about the brand's quality and other related characteristics.

Image Congruence between a Private Brand and a Consumer's Self

Consumers purchase a specific brand not only for functional utility but also for social meaning and images the brand is associated with (Solomon 1983). Consumers prefer a brand when its characteristics match their perceptions of themselves. Because consumers compare a brand's personality and themselves, consumers' preference of a brand might be due to image differences between brands (Grubb and Stern 1971). It's quite natural for consumers to prefer brands that fulfill or enhance their self image. They try to maintain and affirm their worthiness as an individual. Through self-enhancing brands, they expect to heighten the value of themselves and to acquire social recognition (Kunda 2000). In fact, consumers tend to identify themselves with the brand they own. In a study employing two competing automobile brands,

Grubb and Hupp (1968) found that self concept and brand concept are closely related.

As in the case of national brands, there is a strong possibility that consumers' attitudes toward a private brand are closely related to their self images. If consumers believe that a private brand is similar to themselves, they will evaluate the private brand more favorably. On the contrary, if consumers believe a private brand is unfit for their self images, the private brand would be evaluated less favorably. Theoretical supports for a positive effect on the evaluation of private brands by image congruence between private brands and consumer themselves could be found in categorization theory. According to categorization theory, category similarity has a positive effect on consumer evaluation of a new category (Rosch 1973). That is, if a new category matches an existing category, consumers' attitudes toward the new category would be similar to their attitudes toward the existing category. Thus, if a consumer feels a private brand, a new category, similar to his/her self, an existing category, s/he would evaluate the private brand positively because s/he would normally have a positive attitude toward her/his self. Based on this reasoning:

H1: As image congruence between a private brand and a consumer's self becomes higher, a consumer's attitudes toward the private brand will be more favorable.

Image Congruence between a Store and a Product Category

Store image has considerable impact on the shopping decisions of the consumers (Zimmer and Golden 1988). Retailers maintain consistent store image to appeal to target segments. Store image consistent with the needs of the target market segment can lead to increased store loyalty, sales, and profit (Corstjens and Lal 2000). When they determine the merchandise mix of a store, retailers have to consider their store images. For example, a retail store trying to build high tech image should be equipped with high tech products. As an important element consisting of store image, merchandise mix should represent appropriate combinations of products fit for store image and customer needs. Because private brands are a part of store image, product categories associated with private brands are expected to reflect store image quite well. When they decide to include a new product category into its private brand, retailers need to carefully examine its effect lest it diminish the image consistency of the store.

A product category having similar characteristics to a store will make a good member for a private brand. For example, economic and utilitarian products are suitable for a discount store's private brands. Because these products offer a close conceptual fit for the store, consumers would have favorable attitudes toward private brands associated with these products. In the same vein, luxurious or high fashion items are more appropriate for a department store or a specialty store's private brands. If a new product category included into a private brand is unfit for store image, image incongruity between a store and a private brand will occur. For example, if Wal-Mart sells high fashion mufflers at very expensive prices under its own brand, Kathy Lee, consumers will be confused at the contradictory images the product brings in. In short, congruence between product image and store image will have a positive effect on a consumer's attitudes toward a private brand. While consumers evaluate private brands containing product categories fit for store image favorably, they evaluate private brands containing product categories unfit for store image unfavorably. Based on this reasoning:

H2: As image congruence between a store and a product category becomes higher, a consumer's attitudes toward

a private brand associated with the product category will be more favorable.

Store Attitudes and Attitudes toward Private Brands

As a part of a retail store, private brands are significantly affected by the evaluation of the store (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991). Because private brands generally do not engage in extensive out-of-store marketing activities, consumers commonly depend on their attitudes toward the store or store image when they evaluate a store's private brands. That is probably why consumers think sporty and urban images from 'Hunters Run' of the Limited and frugal and reliable images from Sam's Choice of Wal Mart (Levy and Weitz 2001). To receive more positive evaluation for their private brands, retailers have to improve consumers' attitudes toward stores through the development of specific store images that target customers want and prefer. Of course, consumers will not automatically evaluate private brands favorably even if they have favorable store attitudes. If, as mentioned in the previous section, inappropriate product categories are used for private brands, or if images of private brands do not fit well for store image, consumer evaluation of the private brands could remain unfavorable. Nonetheless, if all other conditions are equal, consumers with more favorable store attitudes would evaluate private brands more positively than consumers with less favorable store attitudes. Based on this reasoning:

H3: As a consumer's attitudes toward a store becomes higher, his or her attitudes toward the store's private brand will be more favorable.

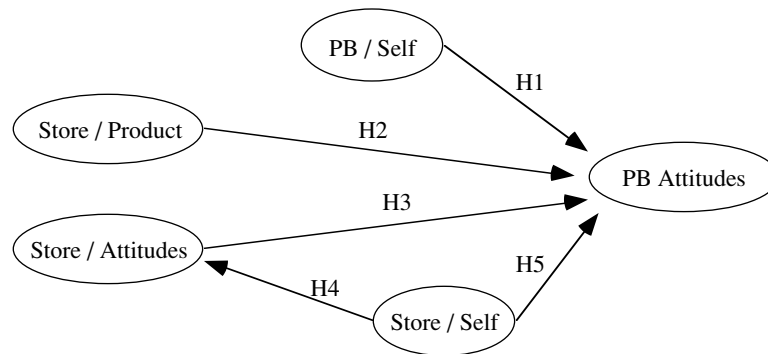
Image Congruence between a Store and a Consumer's Self

Effects on Attitudes toward Stores: Store image has a significant effect on consumers' store loyalty (Martineau 1958). Many studies support that store image has positive effects on consumers' purchasing in the store (Grewal et al. 1998; Zimmer and Golden 1988). Like a brand, consumers tend to select a store that has a personality consistent with their self images. Consumers prefer a store that provides self-enhancing opportunities (Kunda 2000). According to Bellenger et al. (1976), consumers' store loyalty is related to congruence between store image and self image. Therefore, developing store images consistent with self image of target consumers can lead to more positive attitudes toward the store. As in the case of image congruence between a private brand and a consumer's self, categorization theory again can be borrowed to explain the effect of image congruence between a store and a consumer's self on attitudes toward a store. If a store matches well with themselves, consumers will evaluate the store more positively. If a store does not match well with themselves, consumers will evaluate the store less positively. Based on this reasoning:

H4: As image congruence between a store and a consumer's self becomes higher, a consumer's attitudes toward the store will be more favorable.

Effects on Attitudes toward Private Brands: While image congruence between a store and a consumer's self has a direct positive effect on attitudes toward a store, it also seems to have a direct positive effect on attitudes toward private brands. As mentioned in the previous section, private brands are a part of store image. Therefore, if consumers believe a store fits themselves well, they will feel private brands of the store fit themselves well and evaluate private brands of the store more favorably. On the contrary, if they regard the store as not their type, they may evaluate private brands of the store less favorably. Based on this reasoning:

FIGURE 1
Hypothesized Relationships



H5: As image congruence between a store and a consumer's self becomes higher, a consumer's attitudes toward the store's private brand will be more favorable.

Figure 1 summarizes all the hypothesized relationships.

METHOD

Study Design

Two types of image are utilized for the current study: functional image and hedonic image. Two Korean retail stores are employed for the manipulation of store image. One is a department store (Lotte) and the other is a discount store (Mega Mart). Department stores represent hedonic image and discount stores represent functional image. Both stores are top contenders in each category. Perfumes and detergents are employed for the manipulation of product image. Perfumes are for hedonic image and detergents are for functional image. These two product categories were selected after a pretest. They had the most distinguishing image, either hedonic or functional, among eight product categories tested—earrings, crystals, perfumes, bracelets, cooking foils, detergents, toothpastes, shampoos. This manipulation of store image and product image resulted in a total of 4 different experimental cells: Lotte Perfumes, Lotte Detergents, Mega Mart Perfumes, and Mega Mart Detergents. For the current study, two real private brands—Charlotte from Lotte, Basquia from Mega-Market—are employed. They are utilized along with the assumption of new brand extensions into two product categories (i.e., perfumes and detergents). Details are explained in the following section. Consumer's self image was not manipulated but simply measured.

Data Collection

A total of 283 Korean consumers participated in the study. Subjects were conveniently sampled from residential areas near each store. They were randomly assigned to each of 4 experimental conditions. Only subjects who are familiar with the store in the questionnaire were allowed to fill out the questionnaire. Eight trained research associates conducted the field survey. They received about \$1 per response. Questionnaire items were arranged in the following order: 4 items measuring image congruence between store and product, 4 items measuring image congruence between store and self, 3 items measuring attitudes toward store, 3 items measuring product image, 4 items measuring image congruence

between private brand and self, 3 items measuring store image, 3 items measuring attitudes toward private brand, and a couple of demographic items in the end. Among the above mentioned measures, both product image measure and store image measure were for the purpose of manipulation checks. Before measuring image congruence between private brand and self, following sentence was mentioned: "Recently, many big retailers sell their own store brands. Lotte (or Mega Mart) has Charlotte (or Basquia) as one of their store brands. Assume that Lotte (or Mega Mart) sells perfumes (or detergents) under their own store brand, Charlotte (or Basquia). Please indicate your opinion on an appropriate number below in relation with Charlotte (or Basquia) perfumes (or detergents)." Subjects spent 5-10 minutes to finish the questionnaire. Among 283 responses, 10 were deleted due to omission and other reasons, resulting in a total of 273 completed questionnaires.

Measures

Image congruence: Traditionally image congruence was measured indirectly using discrepancy scores (Sirgy 1982; Sirgy et al. 1991; Sirgy et al. 1997). Examples of traditional congruence measure models include simple difference model, weighted simple difference model, Euclidian distance model, absolute difference model, difference squared model, and so on. In this study, however, congruence was measured with a new direct method suggested by Sirgy et al (1997). Based on Sirgy et al's (1997) self image congruence measures, items measuring a consumer's holistic, gestalt-like perception about the image congruence were developed for each of three image congruence. For the measurement of each of three image congruence, four 1-5 strongly agree-strongly disagree Likert type scales were developed respectively. Measuring items for the case of Lotte perfumes are summarized in Table-1. The same sentences were applied for the cases of detergents and Mega Mart.

Attitudes: Three 5-1 bipolar scales with endpoints labeled "good-bad", "like-dislike", and "favorable-unfavorable" were developed for the measurement of attitudes. The same scales were used for the measurement of attitudes toward store and attitudes toward private brands.

Image: Two identical sets of 5-1 bipolar scales with end points labeled "functional-hedonic", "rational-emotional", and "problem solving-autotellic" were developed to measure hedonic and functional dimensions of store image and product image. They were developed based on previous studies (Hirshman and Holbrook 1982), and used for the manipulation checks.

TABLE 1
Measuring Items for the Image Congruence
(Lotte Perfume Case)

Image Congruence	Items	
store vs. product	SP1	Lotte and perfumes fit well each other.
	SP2*	It's appropriate for perfumes to be sold at Lotte,
	SP3	Perfumes and Lotte make senses each other,
	SP4	Image of perfumes and image of Lotte are very similar.
store vs. self=	SS1*	Seeing Lotte users is very much like as if I see myself.
	SS2	Image of Lotte and my self-image are very similar.
	SS3	Lotte users are very much like me.
	SS4	People like me are the typical Lotte users.
private brand vs. self	PS1	I will be the typical user of Charlotte perfume.
	PS2*	Charlotte perfume will reflect well who I am.
	PS3	Charlotte and I will fit well each other.
	PS4	Image of Charlotte perfume and my self-image will be quite similar.

* items removed from the final analysis

RESULTS

Preliminary Data Analysis

Prior testing the proposed model, measurement models for exogenous variables(x) and endogenous variables(h) were tested with confirmatory factor analysis (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Test results showed that while model fit for endogenous variables(h) was good ($c^2=13.27$ (d.f.=6, $p=.039$), NFI=.99, CFI=1.0, RMR=.041, GFI=.98, AGFI=.94), model fit for exogenous variables(?) was not very good. Using modification index, one observed variable from each of three exogenous variables(x_1, x_2, x_3) was removed. The new measurement model for x variables with three observed variables each produced a good model fit ($c^2=110.48$ (d.f.=47, $p=.00$), NFI=.96, CFI=.98, RMR=.037, GFI=.94, AGFI=.91).

Descriptive statistics for product images and store images were calculated. Perfumes (i.e., hedonic products) were rated more hedonic than functional in both stores ($m=2.57$ for Lotte; $m=2.43$ for Mega Mart), and detergents (i.e., functional products) were rated more functional than hedonic in both stores ($m=3.88$ for Lotte; $m=3.58$ for Mega Mart). Lotte (i.e., a hedonic store) was rated more hedonic than functional in both product categories ($m=2.98$ for perfumes; $m=2.71$ for detergents), and Mega Mart (i.e., a functional store) was rated more functional than hedonic in both product categories ($m=3.75$ for perfumes; $m=3.33$ for detergents). To find no difference in mean image values between experimental manipulations mentioned above, t-tests were performed. Contrary to expectation, t-tests identified significant differences in three cases except the case of perfumes. That is, no difference was found only in mean perfume images between Lotte (2.57) and Mega Mart (2.43). Because mean image values appeared as expected (i.e., functional when it should be, and hedonic when it should be), however, appropriateness of manipulations was checked again with

aggregate data based on product images and store images (Table 2). T-tests were performed to confirm differences in both product and store image manipulations. Test results showed that manipulations were successful. Table 2 summarizes t-test results for both product and store images

Hypothesis Tests

Hypotheses were tested through structural equation model using LISREL 8.30. The structural equation model is depicted in Figure 2. The structural equation model was estimated with Maximum Likelihood method after fixing the loading of one of the observed variables of each construct to 1. An acceptable model fit was generated ($X^2=257.14$ (d.f.=77, $p=0.0$), NFI=.94, CFI=.95, GFI=.90, AGFI=.84, RMR=.068), and hypotheses were tested with the analysis results (Table 3).

H1 is about the positive effect of PS(image congruence between a private brand and a consumer's self) on PA(attitudes toward private brands). The gamma coefficient between PS and PA was negative and significant ($g_{21}=-.73$, $t=-11.25$, $p<.000$). Because smaller values in the image congruence measure mean higher congruity, a direct positive effect of PS(image congruence between a private brand and a consumer's self) on PA(attitudes toward private brands) was observed. As the image congruence between a private brand and a consumer's self becomes higher, a consumer's attitudes toward a private brand become more positive. H1 was strongly supported.

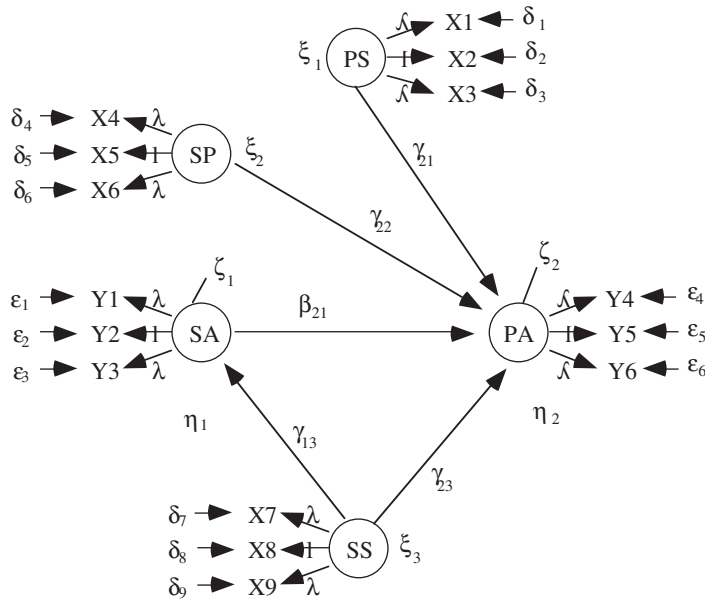
H2 proposes that SP(image congruence between a store and a product) would have a positive effect on PA(attitudes toward private brands). The gamma coefficient between SP and PA was negative and significant ($g_{22}=.12$, $t=2.24$, $p<.05$). As images between a store and a product become more similar, a consumer's attitudes toward private brands become more positive. SP(image congruence

TABLE 2
Mean Ratings of Product and Store Images and t-test Results

Image Type	classification	mean (n)	s.d.	T	p-value
Product Image	Perfumes	2.4934 (152)	.7768	-12.923	.000
	Detergents	3.7245 (121)	.7884		
Store Image	Lotte	2.8611 (132)	.6408	-8.136	.000
	Mega Mart	3.5626 (141)	.7809		

(1: hedonic, emotional, autotellic 5: functional, rational, problem solving)

FIGURE 2
Tested Structural Equation Model



between store and product) has a direct effect on PA(attitudes toward a private brand). H2 was supported.

H3 is about the effect of SA(attitudes toward a store) on PA(attitudes toward a private brand). The beta coefficient between SA and PA was positive and significant ($\beta_{21}=.10, t=1.91, p<.05$). Attitudes toward a store have a direct positive effect on attitudes toward a private brand. In other words, consumer with more positive attitudes toward a store would have more positive attitudes toward a private brand. H3 was supported.

H4 suggests that SS(image congruence between a store and a consumer's self) has a positive effect on SA(attitudes toward a store). The gamma coefficient between SS and SA was significant ($\gamma_{13}=.44, t=-5.75, p<.00$). With the increase of similarity between a store's image and consumers' self images, consumers' attitudes toward the store become more positive. H4 was strongly supported.

H5 is about the relationship between SS(image congruence between a store and a consumer's self) and PA(attitudes toward a private brand). The gamma coefficient from SS to PA was significant ($\gamma_{23}=.19, t=2.78, p<.05$) but opposite to the hypothesized direction. Image congruence between a store and a consumer's self has a direct negative effect on attitudes toward a private brand. As

consumers feel themselves more similar to a store, their attitudes toward a private brand of the store become less positive. H5 was not supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that image congruence between private brands and a consumer's self has a positive effect on attitudes toward private brands. In other words, as in the case of national brands, consumers compare private brands with their self-image when they form attitudes toward private brands. Therefore, retailers need to make their private brands deliver images that target customers want to attain. Reading customers' minds more carefully and developing their private brands' images in accordance with are what retailers need to do.

This study also confirms that image congruence between a store and a product category has a positive effect on attitudes toward a private brand associated with the product category. Consumers facing image incongruence in a store due to a wrong product category may be confused about intentions of the store. Confusion in image by consumers will not only interrupt retailer's store image fortification strategy but also have a detrimental effect on consumer's

TABLE 3
Structural Equation Model Estimation Results

Hypotheses	Parameter	Estimate	t	Test Results
H1	γ_{21}	-0.73	-11.25*	Supported
H2	γ_{22}	-0.12	-2.24**	Supported
H3	γ_{21}	0.10	1.91**	Supported
H4	γ_{13}	-0.44	-5.75*	Supported
H5	γ_{23}	0.19	2.78**	Not supported #

* $p < .00$, ** $p < .05$, # Significant, but opposite to the hypothesized direction.

Fit Indices: $X^2=257.14$ (d.f.=77, $p=0.0$), RMR=0.068, GFI=0.90, AGFI=0.84, NFI=0.94, CFI=0.95

preference of a store. Before including a new product category into their private brands, therefore, retailers need to find product categories similar in image to their stores.

Attitudes toward a store, as expected, have a positive effect on attitudes toward a private brand. In other words, if consumer attitudes toward a store become favorable, consumer attitudes toward a private brand become favorable too. One precaution, however, is interpretation of the positive effect by attitudes toward a store on attitudes toward a private brand should be limited because the effect is not highly significant ($t=1.91$, $p < .05$). Of course, if all other things are equal, stores with better image or more positive attitudes will have higher chances to receive more favorable attitudes toward private brands.

Positive effects of image congruence between a store and a consumer's self on attitudes toward a store were also confirmed. Because store attitudes have positive effects on attitudes toward a private brand, image congruence between a store and a consumer's self also has positive effects on attitudes toward a private brand, though indirectly. Therefore, retailers are recommended to plan and develop store images appealing to and wanted by target customers, and to maintain the established store images the same.

Contrary to the hypothesis, image congruence between a store and a consumer's self has negative effects on attitudes toward a private brand. That is, as consumers believe a store becomes more similar to their selves, they develop more unfavorable attitudes toward a private brand of the store. Although this result is somewhat unexpected, it could be understandable when we consider the negative perception many consumers have against private brands (Dunne and Narasimhan 1999; Richardson, Dick, and Jain 1994). If components of store image are grouped into two dimensions—positive and negative—and if consumers perceive private brands negatively, private brands, a component of store image, may belong to the negative dimension. If this is the case, even though consumers have positive attitudes toward the store, they may not have positive attitudes toward private brands that constitute the lowest class of merchandise in the store. As consumers feel the store more similar to themselves, their attitudes toward private brands could be all the more negative because private brands reflect negative aspects of the store. If this explanation is appropriate, this result means retailers to turn their value-oriented strategies into quality-oriented strategies to overcome consumers' negative perceptions toward private brands in general. According to many recent studies (Corstjens and Lal 2000; Dhar and Hock 1997; Hoch and Banerji 1993; Sayman, Hoch, and Raju 2002), quality-oriented strategies are more viable than value-oriented strategies for the success of private brands in the long run. Consumers' negative perceptions toward private brands

seem to have been a barrier rather than a catalyst for the development and success of private brands in the market.

Limitations and Future Studies

This study has some limitations. First, this study lacks unique characteristics in its theoretical framework for a study of private brands. To overcome this weakness, future studies need to either develop a more unique theoretical framework or compare private brands with national brands simultaneously. Second, besides three types of image congruence, other types of image congruence can be considered in the model. For example, image congruence between a private brand and a store or image congruence between a store and a divided consumer's self such as ideal self can be dealt with. Third, although this study explains the opposite test result of H5 with negative perceptions many consumers have against private brands, the explanation may not be enough. To solve this problem, more sophisticated studies are essential. Finally, this study was performed in Korean context. To verify and generalize the finding of current study, cross-cultural replications on this subject are required.

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Category Induction and Nonmonotonicity: Application to Branded Products and Their Competitors

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this research we examine the use of categories in reasoning, or more specifically, how individuals use information about one set of categories to make inferences about (or generalize to) another category. In particular we focus on the nonmonotonicity phenomenon (Osherson et al. 1990), examining how information about a competitor's product can weaken inferences about a brand's products under different conditions. We examine this category-based induction phenomenon in a pair of studies that investigated some of the factors, including the similarity of the competitor's product and the type of attribute information, that might mediate the effect.

Few studies have directly sought to examine the role of category relationships in inference making about brand categories, even though an important function of categories in information processing is to support these inferences (Ross and Murphy 1999). If consumers believe that two products belong to the same category, they may perceive them as sharing category attributes (Barsalou 1992). If a consumer believes that Nike cross trainers are durable, she may infer that another Nike product, or perhaps all Nike products, are durable. Osherson et al. (1990) developed an influential similarity-based model of category induction that we use as the conceptual basis for an investigation of consumer inference making.

Two studies examined the nonmonotonicity phenomenon in the context of brand categories. Presentation of the information as arguments followed the technique commonly used in research examining category-based induction (e.g., Choi et al. 1997; Osherson et al. 1990):

Argument A:	<u>Nike cross trainers are durable</u>	(premise)
	Therefore, all Nike products are durable	(conclusion)
Argument B:	Nike cross trainers are durable	(premise #1)
	<u>Reebok cross trainers are durable</u>	(premise #2)
	Therefore, all Nike products are durable	(conclusion)

Respondents were asked to rate the strength of each argument and then to select which one was strongest in a forced choice question. The nonmonotonicity effect was demonstrated when the single-premise argument (A) was rated as stronger than the two-premise argument (B).

The Osherson et al. (1990) model suggests that this inference from one branded product to others can be weakened by introducing seemingly irrelevant information. If the consumer knows that not only Nike, but also Reebok, cross-trainers are durable, she may be less likely to generalize this characteristic to the overall Nike brand category than without this competitor information. In other words this information may weaken inferences that all Nike products are durable. In a sense, the addition of information about Reebok sneakers (being durable) should not be relevant to whether the consumer infers that all Nike products are durable. So why should irrelevant information have an impact on inferences about branded products?

One explanation derives from theories, like the Osherson model, that analyze how people use category membership to determine how far they can generalize an attribute from one object to another (cf. Barsalou 1992; Osherson et al. 1990). Building on previous research, we examine how similarity judgments between

branded products and categories affect consumers' willingness to generalize about product attributes. According to Osherson's model, individuals are thought to generate an "inclusive category" that includes all of the brands, products, and categories being considered and which serves as an information processing, or inference-making, context. When competitor information is introduced along with the focal brand, this inclusive category/context broadens to include the competitor information. This broadening can create changes in perceptions about the similarities between the brands, products, and categories being considered. We look at how differences in these similarity perceptions impact the inference process.

We expect that adding a premise about a dissimilar competitor/product, as compared to a more similar competitor, will cause individuals to generate a broader, more variable inclusive category. As a result, the similarity relationships that drive consumers' inferences will be lessened, increasing the likelihood of the nonmonotonicity effect. The addition of the dissimilar competitor should have a significant impact on individuals' willingness to generalize the attribute. We also address a criticism of the Osherson model by directly investigating how the nature of the attribute (meaningless/blank vs. meaningful/nonsalient vs. meaningful/salient) plays a role in this form of reasoning. We suggest that when individuals reason about meaningful product attributes (vs. meaningless, hypothetical attributes), they are more likely to rely on existing category knowledge and to use heuristic, similarity-based processes increasing the incidence of the nonmonotonicity effect. Blank attributes are more likely to elicit more formal, analytic strategies that rely on non-similarity-based modes of making judgments decreasing the incidence of the effect.

Our data reveals that the nonmonotonicity effect does exist with consumer stimuli. Consumers reduced their willingness to generalize about a brand attribute from a specific branded product (Nike cross trainers) to the general category (all Nike products) as a result of the simple addition of information about a competitor's product that possesses the same attribute. Our data provided support for the Osherson et al. (1990) similarity-based coverage hypothesis. The introduction of the competitor information changed the category that provides a context for the information and the resulting similarity judgments that support the attribute inferences. Our data suggest that the nonmonotonicity effect is moderated by the two factors we considered. First, the nature of the attributes appears to play a significant role in similarity-based reasoning. Meaningful, and especially salient, attributes increased the incidence of the effect. Second, the addition of information about a dissimilar competitor increases the likelihood of the effect relative to information about a similar competitor.

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When Categorization is Ambiguous: Factors that Facilitate and Inhibit the Use of a Multiple (Versus Single) Category Inference Strategy

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Prior research has established that categorization plays a central role in new product learning (Sujan, 1985). Very little is known, however, about the operation of this commonly studied category-based learning process under conditions of categorization ambiguity. Categorization ambiguity exists when information about a new product makes it difficult or impossible to place the novel offering in a single, existing category. Many of the new technological innovations hitting the market today fit this profile, as they often combine the features and functionality of existing products to create a single hybrid product. For example, there are personal digital assistants (PDAs) with cell phone functions and cell phones with PDA functions. The categorization of these products is highly ambiguous because, in both cases, the hybrid could logically be considered either a PDA or a cell phone.

It is currently unclear how consumers use existing category knowledge when faced with ambiguity of this nature. Of particular interest is whether and under what circumstances consumers employ a multiple (versus single) category strategy to generate inferences about ambiguous products. When faced with a PDA-cell phone, for instance, the question is whether consumers will base their expectations about the product on knowledge associated with multiple categories (*both* the PDA category *and* the cell phone category) or a single category (the PDA category *or* the cell phone category). Existing consumer research is all but mute on this issue. The focus of prior studies has been almost exclusively on inference generation from a single category (for a notable exception, see Moreau, Markman, and Lehmann 2001), leaving all but the most basic questions pertaining to multiple category use unanswered. Addressing this void, the purpose of this paper is to examine the factors that determine whether consumers will rely primarily on a multiple or single category inference strategy under conditions of categorization ambiguity.

Generating Inferences When Categorization Is Ambiguous

Existing research suggests that individuals are able to use information from multiple categories to draw inferences about ambiguous stimuli, but that they are typically unwilling to do so unless significant contextual support is provided. These findings are valuable for establishing that individuals can employ a multiple category strategy, but they give us little insight into the general factors that facilitate and hinder the use of a multiple (versus single) category strategy. In addition, it is difficult to predict which category consumers would select as the source of inferences in the event that a single category strategy is implemented. Absent this information, it is difficult to make specific predictions about consumers' use of existing category knowledge to generate inferences about ambiguous products.

With this in mind, in the next section, we identify two factors—category familiarity and the nature of the category cue—that we believe are responsible for regulating the incidence of multiple (versus single) category inference processes.

Category Familiarity

In order to generate inferences via a multiple category strategy, it is often necessary to change or update at least one of the

categories involved in making the prediction. To see why, consider the case of the PDA-cell phone mentioned earlier. When consumers confront an ambiguous product like the PDA-cell phone, and attempt to use both the PDA and cell phone categories to make predictions, they are likely to generate inferences that entail discrepant attribute values. As an example, if consumers are asked if the PDA-cell phone will be good at *scheduling*, their PDA category will indicate a positive response, while their cell phone category will indicate a negative or “not applicable” response. In contrast, if consumers are asked if the new product will be good at *making phone calls*, their PDA category will indicate a negative or “not applicable” response, while their cell phone category will indicate a positive response. In general, thinking about an ambiguous product as an instance of one category will lead to the generation of very different expectations than thinking about the product as an instance of a second distinct category.

This suggests that a category updating process is likely to be initiated as a result of multiple category inferencing. That is, consumers are likely to either (a) update the PDA category to accommodate the new value for making phone calls or (b) update the cell phone category to accommodate the new value for scheduling.

The Nature of the Category Cue

Category membership information can be delivered either *perceptually*, via visual depiction of a category member, or *conceptually*, via a category label. Research on the relative diagnosticity of conceptual versus perceptual information in the inference generation process has yielded mixed results. In one study, subjects were presented with pictures of exemplars that were physically similar to members of one category, but possessed the label of another category, and were asked to predict a missing feature. The results suggested that subjects placed significantly more weight on the (conceptual) category label information than the (perceptual) category similarity information when generating their inferences (Yamauchi & Markman, 2000). Other research has reported just the opposite. Pitting category label information against category similarity, Florian (1994) found strong evidence that subjects based their attribute inferences entirely on similarity.

This divergence in findings may be explained, at least in part, by variance in the relative diagnosticity of perceptual versus conceptual information across stimuli and situations (Feldman & Lynch, 1988). Supporting this interpretation, Yamauchi and Markman (2000) found that not all category labels were equal in their ability to override category similarity in the inference process. Specifically, category labels designed to convey class inclusion information (e.g., labels indicating two types of bug) had more power to sway inferences than those lacking this highly diagnostic information (e.g., labels indicating two shapes of wing).

Hypotheses

H1: When an ambiguous product is represented perceptually by a high familiarity category and conceptually by a low familiarity category, a single category inference strategy will be used where inferences will be based on the high familiarity category.

H2: When an ambiguous product is represented perceptually by a low familiarity category and conceptually by a high familiarity category, a multiple category inference strategy will be used where inferences will be based on both the conceptually and the perceptually cued categories.

Results and Implications

While it has been possible in prior research to prompt individuals to draw on multiple categories to generate inferences about an ambiguous item, rather extreme measures were required to achieve this outcome. Indeed, this body of work leaves one with the impression that people are unlikely to rely on a multiple category inference strategy unless they are placed in highly contrived conditions. The results of our studies suggest otherwise. Respondents in study 1 employed a multiple category inference strategy in response to an ad that represented an ambiguous product perceptually as a member of a low familiarity category (PDA) and conceptually as a member of a high familiarity category (cell phone). Attempts to focus respondents' attention on a single category in study 2 by strengthening the activation of the low familiarity perceptually cued category failed to dissuade them from relying on multiple categories to generate inferences. Likewise, attempts to weaken the conceptual cue in study 3 by replacing it with a low (versus high) familiarity category failed to derail the use of multiple categories.

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Is Being Good Better Than Being Cheap, or is Being Cheap Better Than Being Good?

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ABSTRACT

An assumption in the literature on defensive customer retention strategies is that customers who receive poor service quality from their current supplier are more inclined to switch to an attacking supplier. However, what to communicate to trigger switching from existing supplier to a new, previously unknown supplier is less known in this literature. This paper investigates how attacking firms can design persuasive advertising messages aiming to capture competitors' customers. In a 2 x 2 factorial experiment we find that economic advertising appeals are more persuasive than appeals stressing service quality for subjects currently receiving poor service quality. For customers who perceived service quality to be satisfactory, there was no difference in persuasiveness between the different appeals.

INTRODUCTION

In a wide range of contemporary textbooks, journal publications and popular press discussions on service marketing, firms have been advised to focus on service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. In other words, maintaining long-term relationships with customers has been a catchphrase over the last decades, and this defensive strategy towards improved economic performance (Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann 1994; Fornell 1992) has proved significant merits to its credit. However, while firms strive to keep their current customers satisfied and loyal, this strategy has usually been accompanied by attempts to recruit new customers. For example, introducing services of enhanced sophistication to members of their frequent flyer programs has not necessarily reduced airline companies' quest for recruiting new customers by means of price reductions, new product developments (e.g. new destinations) and the like. Hence, service firm managers are often confronted with the riddle of combining defensive strategies aimed at keeping current customers satisfied and loyal, and offensive strategies directed at "stealing" customers from competitors. We acknowledge both these strategies as equally important, and as such, this paper attempts to delve into how a service firm can use basic knowledge about defensive strategies when initiating offensive marketing strategies in target markets. Stated differently, how can knowledge on the mechanisms working within the basic quality, satisfaction and loyalty models be used by attacking companies in designing advertising appeals to capture the customers of incumbent service providers? This is the center of attention in this research, and the subsequent paragraphs will outline our specific research questions.

When trying to retain customers, the quality of the service delivery has proved to be a major determinant of customer loyalty (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1996). Hence, the dominant thinking is that customers who perceive the service to be of high quality, will be more inclined to stay with the service provider than customers who experience the opposite (Oliver 1997). However, due to the intangible nature of most services, two different customers might have completely different quality perceptions of the same service provider. To further complicate the issue, the same intangible nature of services might result in different objective quality levels because service quality differ among employees who provide the service, at different points in time, and the like. Accordingly,

variation in customers' perception of service quality might result from either an objective quality difference or from a subjectively perceived difference based on expectation diversity (Boulding et al. 1993). These basic assumptions explain why perceptions of service quality often vary within the customer group of one specific company. Customers who assess the quality of received services to be unsatisfactory should be more inclined to switch to another supplier, which is an assumption supported extensively in the literature (Fornell et al. 1996; Ping 1993; Selnes 1993; Yi 1990). Frequently, a motive needs to be triggered to affect behavior. In this case the question pertains to which appeals could trigger the motive to switch?

Firms who are initiating an offensive strategy aimed at recruiting customers presently served by competitors should intuitively aim for the dissatisfied customers. The assumption from the loyalty literature is that these are more prone to switch than the satisfied customers. The question, then, is what kind of message to send these customers? Drawing on a customer value perspective (Newman 1988), although in a simplified version, we argue that customers can either be told that higher service quality can be acquired at a price equal to the one paid today, or that the same level of quality might be received at a lower price. Stated differently, a persuasion attempt can draw on two fundamentally different kinds of arguments; being better or being cheaper.

Being Better...

First, one might argue that if the reason some customers are dissatisfied is because of quality absence, then the message should focus on the quality dimensions of the service offered. So doing, several effects might be achieved. If the customer compares the quality he has received from the current supplier with the quality arguments communicated by the attacking firm, any gap in favor of the attacking firm may produce a situation of perceived inequity, thereby decreasing satisfaction even more and in so doing boost the intention to switch to the attacking supplier (Yi 1990). Moreover, if an attacking firm plays the service quality card, the message will hit the displeased consumer right in the heart of his source of dissatisfaction with the current supplier. In a relationship between a service provider and a customer, the customer's satisfaction level is based on an attitude-like post purchase evaluation (Mano and Oliver 1993). An important detail in this respect is that for a wide range of services the core offering is more or less standardized (e.g. hotel beds, airline seats, travel agent services), leading competition to be more or less centered around the extended offering (Zikmund and d'Amico 1996). Stated differently, competition places the additions in the spotlight, while the core offering is often more or less equal across firms. This implies that the quality of the core offering itself might often be viewed as a hygiene factor, while the extended (service) offering is what makes up motivation factors (Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman 1959). Drawing on a multi-attribute attitude model (Lutz 1991), being informed about an alternative supplier's quality on important (extended product) attributes might alter the customer's attitudes in favor of this new supplier. Likewise, from a decision theory perspective (Bettman, Johnson and Payne 1991), arguments focusing on the attacking supplier's quality on attributes where the current relationship partner performs

poorly might result in the attacking firm being the one that stands out in a firm-by-firm comparison. Now the incumbent firm is not just facing a dissatisfied customer, but a dissatisfied customer aware of a better alternative. And probably worse—a customer with an increased intention to switch.

Being Cheaper...

Second, a persuasive message can be rooted in purely economic arguments, thus trying to position one's own services as cheaper than those of the competitors. Economic arguments like low price is a competitive strategy that draws on the varying price consciousness, price sensitivity and economic well being of consumers (e.g. Lichtenstein, Ridgway and Netemeyer 1993). While the economic success for a low price strategy is contingent on a variety of issues like the firm's ability to develop a cost leadership (Porter 1985), the inherent consumer benefits related to low price is more straightforward. For example, given that service products hold equal quality levels, the less expensive one should generally be chosen over the more expensive ones (Edwards 1954). Hence, economic arguments should intuitively be tempting to a number of consumers. In addition to the attractiveness of economic arguments *pr se*, the intangible nature of services also gives reasons to expect that customers will be influenced by price arguments. Services are an experience kind of product, and their quality can thus first be properly evaluated at the time of consumption (Lovell 1983). The smoothness of a hotel bed, the taste of a restaurant meal, or the social character of a bank employee–customer interaction cannot be appraised until the customer actually tries or purchases the service. This implies that up front evaluations to a large extent has to be based on beliefs and evaluations of more tangible facets of the service, of which price is the most explicit one. From a decision theory perspective we might argue that one of the few real diagnostic pieces of information a customer can receive about a formerly untried service is its price (Feldman and Lynch 1988). As such, the alternative supplier does not necessarily have to convince the consumer that the quality of the services offered is better than the ones currently received, as long as the price is lower.

Summing up, the preceding paragraphs have shown that the service quality literature gives little advice when it comes to how an attacking service brand should target the customers of incumbent service brands with advertising appeals. However, we have argued that judgments of service quality received from current supplier, might affect the extent to which appeals from attacking brands trigger motivation to switch or not. We have presented arguments suggesting that the two main appeal strategies of being better or being cheaper draw on different explanatory assumptions. The service quality appeal might be effective because it positions itself as better than the service experience received from the current supplier, and thereby facilitates comparison. In other words, the appeal attempts to juxtapose itself on attributes of the extended service offering, a challenging task considering the customer's reduced ability to assess these attributes prior to experience (Zeithaml 1988). However, the economic appeal's effectiveness rests on the assumption that price is a more diagnostic piece of information in service delivery settings where the quality of the delivery is impossible to assess prior to switching. The following paragraphs presents an experiment undertaken to test these two options.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the current study was to test the extent to which customers with different service quality judgments were differently motivated to switch from their current service supplier based on quality vs. economic advertising appeals from an attacking brand. Basically, this represented a 2 (ad-appeal; economic vs. service

quality) x 2 (service quality: high vs. low) between subjects factorial design. Subjects were 113 undergraduate business school students who participated as part of a course requirement. The use of this subject-pool enabled us to efficiently assess their judgments of received service quality and expose them to advertising messages at different points in time. Setting and subjects were considered in conjunction. The context chosen was retail banking, and the attacking service firm was a hypothetical bank with a brand name set up for this study only. The group of students receives student loans from an official government office, a fixed amount at a regulated interest rate. As such, they are consumers with money to spend, and importantly, money to place in a bank. Additionally, all students would have bank accounts already, and they would all have some experience with a current bank-service provider. During the past decade a number of new actors have entered the retail bank market in question, and a several of these have targeted their services especially towards students. This implies that we could credibly announce that a new bank aiming directly at students was to be launched, thus providing a good cover for our manipulation.

Manipulation and Measurement

The first key independent variable, *advertising appeal*, was manipulated through two advertisements. The service quality oriented appeal offered "your own personal adviser to assist you in everything related to personal finance", "We will work hard to adapt to your personal needs", "Membership with Gold-card status in our Key-Customer Program", etc. The focus was intentionally service-relation oriented, and nothing was said about economic benefits. In the economic appeal version, statements included "The student's first choice, and the first bank in the market with price-guarantee", "PC-purchase financing with 0% APR, two year down payment", etc. Besides from argument type, the two ads were completely identical in all other respects (i.e. colors, fonts, pictures, size, etc) and they were both in the format of a full screen sized Internet advertisement.

Service quality was measured with reference to the subjects' current bank-relationship. A total of 6 Likert-type items adapted from the Servqual-instrument were used to tap this construct (Zeithaml and Bitner 2003). Examples on items are "Employees in your bank understand your specific needs" and "Employees in your bank are consistently courteous with you". A confirmatory factor analysis was employed to test the unidimensionality of the service quality scale. A one-factor solution was attained, with factor loadings varying from 0.735 to 0.872. The eigenvalue for the first factor was 4.25, and 70.8 % percent of the variance was explained. The 6 items were collapsed into a summated rating scale with Chronbach's Alpha=0.9. We thus believe the validity and reliability of the service quality measure is quite satisfactory. Next, the summated rating scale was dichotomized based on a median split (median=3,67), thus forming one high and one low service quality group.

The measure on Intention to switch to the attacking retail bank was adapted from the behavioral intentions measures offered by Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996), and read "When you get the opportunity to switch from your current retail bank and to this new bank, how likely do you think it is that you will switch to this new bank?" Both the service quality scale and the behavioral intention item were 5-point measures, with anchors "Totally agree/Totally disagree" and "Not likely at all/Extremely likely", respectively.

Experimental Procedure

The study was completed in two sessions. First, students were randomly assigned to two groups, shown the cover story, and the

TABLE 1
Service Quality x Ad Type Interaction

		Ad type	
		Economical	Serv.qual
Service quality	High	4.19 (1.77) n=26	4.37 (1.82) n=27
	Low	5.75 (1.64) n=32	4.42 (2.13) n=28

note: std.deviation in parentheses

advertising message (either the economic appeal or the service quality appeal). Subjects were exposed to the ad for 15 seconds. Pretests had proved this to be sufficient to read all message arguments at a moderate pace. Subjects then filled out a booklet consisting of a variety of demographic questions, advertisement ratings, and also indicated to what extent they intended to switch to the new bank, once launched. Finally, they answered questions pertaining to the perceived relevance of the messages, the cogency of the presented arguments, and evaluated the extent to which the theme of the advertisement was economical or service oriented, measures intended to serve as manipulation checks.

The second round of the study commenced two days later. As a part of another study, the students answered a standardized customer satisfaction index questionnaire (e.g. Johnson et al. 2001). The subjects were told to answer the survey with the currently used retail bank in mind. Items for service quality assessment were embedded in this questionnaire.

Results

To assess the extent to which the advertisements were perceived as economical or service quality oriented, a one-way ANOVA was run on the item asking subjects to rate on a nine point scale the extent to which the theme of the ad was 1=economical, to 9=service quality. Subjects in the economical treatment condition rated the advertisement as significantly more economical ($M=3.96$) than subjects in the service quality condition ($M=5.8$), ($F(1,110)=20.904$, $p<.000$). A similar analysis was also run to assess the extent to which the two advertisements were perceived as equally cogent. Subjects in the economical treatment condition perceived their advertisement to be more cogent ($M=5.38$) than those in the service quality condition ($M=4.75$), ($F(1,110)=3.47$, $p=.065$), indicating that there could be a chance that the economically oriented advertisement by nature was more convincing. Finally, it could also be the case that the two ads were seen as unequally relevant to the subjects. A one-way ANOVA indicated that subjects in the economical treatment condition perceived the advertisement slightly more relevant ($M=5.81$) than those in the service quality condition ($M=5.13$), ($F(1,110)=3.014$, $p=.085$).

Intention to Switch to the Attacking Brand

The crucial test in this study is the extent to which subjects are motivated to switch to the attacking brand dependent on the service quality level of their current brand, and the advertising appeal of the attacking brand. A 2(service quality) x 2(ad type) between-subjects ANOVA on intention to switch yielded the results presented in

Table 1 and Figure 1. First, a main-effect of service quality was obtained as subjects in the low service quality condition was significantly more inclined to switch than subjects in the high service quality condition ($M_{low\ serv.\ qual}=5.09$, vs $M_{high\ serv.\ qual}=4.28$, $F(1,109)=5.38$, $p=.022$). This a result that corresponds to our expectations, as the basic assumption is that low service quality leads to behavioral consequences unfavorable to the company (Zeithaml et al. 1996). There was no main-effect of ad-type, indicating that the small difference found in the manipulation check did not appear in the motivational capacity of the different advertisements.

Additionally, there is a significant interaction effect between service quality and ad-type ($F(1,109)=4.635$, $p=.034$). As indicated in Table 1 and Figure 1, the service quality argument scores equally regardless of the subjects' level of perceived service quality from their current supplier.

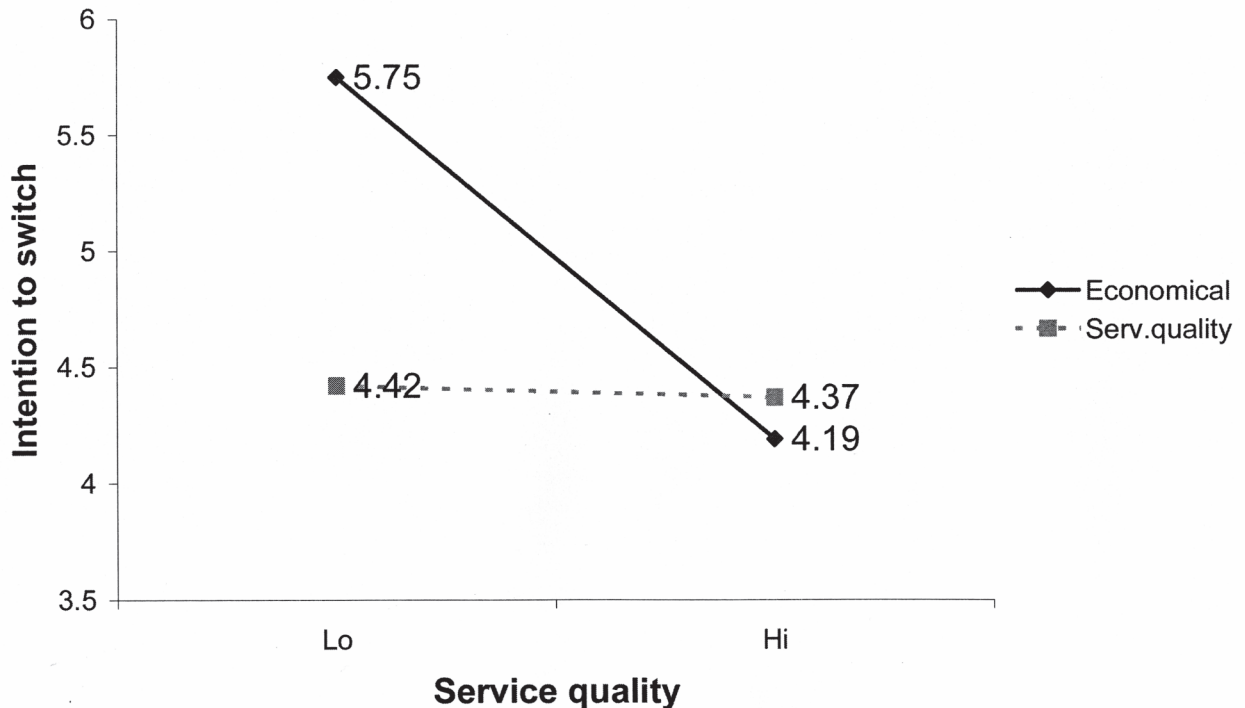
In contrast, the economical appeal scores significantly better among the customers who are dissatisfied with the service quality received from their current supplier. These subjects are not receptive to claims about improved service quality from the attacking supplier. In other words, the results indicated that addressing the causes of consumers' unhappiness when trying to seize them from a competitor is not a feasible strategy.

Related to subjects who rates the services received from the incumbent service supplier to be of high quality, the two ad-themes are equally (in)effective. Accordingly, the effect of ad-type on customers' intention to switch is dependent on the quality received from current supplier. Our results have shown that economically oriented advertising themes are not unequivocally more effective in an assumingly economically oriented business like retail banking.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of our experimental study hold some important implications for marketing theory and practice. In outlining the background for the study, we drew on extant satisfaction literature when advocating that persuasion attempts towards dissatisfied customer should aim at the basis for this displeasure (e.g. Oliver 1997; Newman 1988). In contrast, based on a rational decision making perspective (e.g Edwards 1954) we also argued that price arguments would be a viable strategy due to the intangible nature of experience goods (Alba et al. 1997). Stated differently, information on tangibles will be most diagnostic, and information on aspects like price will therefore influence the decision outcome the most. The empirical findings supports this line of arguments. The idea that customers are unable to evaluate quality dimensions of services

FIGURE 1
Ad Type x Service Quality Interaction



up front is supported by the interaction effect, which shows that economic arguments are the most persuasive ones when the target customers are dissatisfied.

The results of our study also have managerial implications for both offensive and defensive marketing strategies. First, independent of argument type, attacking firms will have an easier job in increasing their number of customers if they first and foremost concentrate on the competitors' less satisfied customers. Furthermore, for the attacking firm our results clearly indicate that recruiting competitors' customers will most successfully be achieved by persuading them by means of economic arguments. However, there are both pros and cons related to such a strategy. As for the pros, a newly introduced brand might find itself with a fast growing market share if competing on price. In this light, price arguments will be very efficient if market share is the firm's primary objective. However, the cons of such a strategy is that firms applying this strategy might both be viewed as a low price actor in the market, while also facing the challenge of keeping low prices on a long-term basis. While the practical examples on price strategies aimed at customer recruitment exists in vast numbers, the examples on how such strategies have constrained firms from reaching the economic performance yearned for is also substantial. Generally speaking, the major drawback of being tempted by price cuts in order to attract new customers is that competitors can easily copy this strategy. As such it does not help firms achieving a sustained competitive advantage (Barney 1991). Hence, we suggest that firms should take the results found in our study into consideration when designing offensive strategies, and contemplate what argument type to use in relation to the overall ambition of the firm, both in terms of market share, brand positioning and future performance.

Second, also for firms applying defensive strategies aimed at retaining their customers our results are of importance. Due to the aforementioned inherent intangibility of services, the level of service satisfaction held by customers will always vary to some degree within a customer group. When trying to improve the satisfaction, loyalty and thus persistence to persuasion among currently dissatisfied customers, our results might be viewed in favor of playing a price, or economic argument, card. We do not necessarily see this as a fruitful path to increased performance. While price arguments might be the most efficient strategy when trying to recruit customers, recall that the reason customers leave due to low service quality is not related to price, but to quality (Zeithaml et al. 1996). Hence, we suggest that firms facing such challenges should focus on improving the facets of service that are the direct antecedents to service failure, and have a long-term orientation on this course of action. Only through focus on customer needs and preferences will the firm be able to increase satisfaction among customers, and adhering to such a focus will be a more successful route to competitive advantage than being tempted by short-term price cuts (Barney 1991).

Limitations and directions for future research

This research presents some initial results indicating that a company that aims to sway customers from an incumbent brand should be attentive to the service quality perceived by the incumbent's customer when designing persuasive advertisements. Especially, it seems that customers receiving poor service quality, are not necessarily looking for alternative suppliers promising better service quality, but rather, a better deal in more economic terms. However, additional studies are needed to address methodological and

theoretical concerns. First, this study only used undergraduate students as sample. It might be argued that based on their relatively lower income-level, they should by nature be more receptive to economically oriented claims. Then again, we should expect so regardless of their level of perceived service quality. In the high service quality group, no differences in claims' persuasiveness were found, thereby questioning the extent to which an "economical bias" influenced our results. Additional studies could test our assumption in another sample, or vary the sample according to this potential biasing factor. Second, evaluations of service quality can be made with varying levels of confidence, depending on the extent to which consumers evaluate search, experience or credence services (e.g., Zeithaml 1988). Banking services are for many purposes search (you can seek out prices prior to adoption), experience (you will experience service level as the relationship develops), and credence (due to lack of expertise, you will have to trust that the bank does its best for you). However, our study did not allow analysis to check the extent to which these sources of performance information were differentially affecting the customers' evaluations or responses. Future research could address this within a bank setting, or utilize different service categories to provide a more explicit test. Third, we utilized a cumulative approach to the measurement of service quality (see e.g., Anderson, Fornell and Lehman 1994), as this cumulative approach has been argued to be more indicative for behavioural intentions. This did not allow us to manipulate service quality judgments. Conversely, service quality could be manipulated in future studies utilizing different service categories. Finally, we measured intention to switch two days prior to assessing level of service quality. Although our service quality measures were embedded as part of a large survey, covering other areas as well, it could be the case that students remembered their previous responses, and tuned their subsequent quality evaluations accordingly. We would assume that the same tuning-problem could surface if the experiment followed the opposite order, but this could also be explicitly manipulated in future studies. A final venue for future research could be to include measures of personality traits, customer expertise, and other situational variables to assess the robustness of our results.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The Influence of Cultural Thinking Style on Evaluative Processes

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Many current theoretical frameworks pertaining to consumer evaluation have been validated only within the U.S. culture. Maheswaran and Shavitt (2000) proposed that the lack of robust frameworks across cultures has severely limited the development of theory-based empirical work. The three papers in this session suggest that culturally linked thinking styles are important mechanisms underlying consumers' evaluative processes for a variety of products and services.

Although cultural thinking styles have been studied intensively in social psychology, they are only starting to attract attention in consumer research. Social psychologists have characterized the reasoning of Western cultures such as the U.S. as analytic, context-independent, and characterized by formal logic, whereas that of Eastern cultures is characterized as holistic, context-dependent, and dialectical (Nisbett et. al. 2001).

In the first paper, Priester, Park, Petty, Wang, and Lee examine whether members of different cultures have different cognitive tendencies toward acceptance of the feelings of conflict toward a target, which pertains to the tendency of *dialectical thinking*, and further different levels of evaluative tension. Specifically, from the standpoint of Western cultural reasoning, the coexistence of positive and negative feelings about the same target is viewed as a contradiction. Hence, those in Western cultures perceive such feelings of "intrapersonal" conflict as less acceptable—accordingly, evaluative tension increases. East Asian dialectical reasoning, however, is more tolerant of such "intrapersonal" conflicts, accepting contradiction and the need for multiple perspectives.

In the second paper, Lee and Shavitt investigate the role of *context-dependent* thinking styles and salient self-construal in pre-purchase quality evaluation. Previous research has concluded that the effect of store name on quality evaluation of a product is minimal compared to price and brand name. They suggest that consumers with salient interdependent (vs. independent) self-construal use store name more, because they are more concerned about the social image implied by store name.

In the third paper, Fedorikhin and Cole suggest that members of different cultures may appraise a service failure differently. Accordingly, a wait for 20 minutes at a McDonald's could evoke more anger in a person from one culture than from another. Such difference in appraisal of service failure and subsequent emotional response may stem from different expectations of consistency of service quality based on cultural cognition. For example, members of holistic cultures are more likely to tolerate an environment that is less controlled and more contradictory to their expectations than are those in analytic cultures (Peng and Nisbett 1999). Notably, the authors found that consumers high in vertical individualism are the most susceptible (i.e., generate more anger) to service failures such as long wait times, which subsequently affects their purchase intentions. It implies that in analytic cultures involving more vertical individualism, people have lower thresholds of tolerance when their expectations conflict with perceived service failure.

"Culture Moderators to Feelings of Ambivalence: When Intra- versus Inter-Personal Conflict Leads to Feelings of Evaluative Tension"

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Kyu-Hyun Lee, Hannam University, South Korea

In both marketing and psychology, there has recently been a surge of interest in better understanding the construct of ambivalence (e.g., Larson, McGraw, and Cacioppo 2001; Newby-Clark, McGregor, and Zanna 2002; Nowlis, Kahn, and Dhar 2002; Sengupta and Johar 2002). Attitudes are typically conceptualized as lying along a bipolar continuum, ranging from negative/unfavorable/dislike on one end of the continuum to positive/favorable/like on the other end. Such a conceptualization obscures the possibility that certain attitudes may contain both positive and negative reactions. For example, Otnes, Lowrey, and Shrum (1997) found that individuals, rather than feeling differing degrees of positivity, often felt both positive and negative reactions to wedding planning.

Recent research by Priester and Petty (2001) has demonstrated that feelings of evaluative tension (i.e., ambivalence) can be the result of not only an individual's own positive and negative feelings (intrapersonal conflict), but can also be the result of holding an attitude that is inconsistent with an important other, such as a best friend of a parent (i.e., interpersonal conflict). Of particular interest with the Priester and Petty (2001) findings was that intrapersonal conflict influenced feelings of evaluative tension approximately three times greater than interpersonal conflict. That is, an individual's own feelings were more influential in causing feelings of evaluative tension than interpersonal attitudinal conflict. It should be noted that these findings were based upon individuals from an independent (i.e., USA) culture, in which the self is largely construed as an individual's own traits, abilities, thoughts, and feelings (Markus and Kitayama 1991). This finding for individuals from an independent culture raises the intriguing question of whether the antecedent of ambivalence varies as a function of culture. Such is the question that drives this research program.

In order to address this question, 1) measures of individuals' own positive and negative reactions to attitudes (i.e., intrapersonal conflict), 2) measures of the extent to which individuals' attitudes were consistent or in conflict with important others (i.e., interpersonal conflict), and 3) indicators of the extent of feelings of evaluative tension were collected. From these measures we could examine the relative influence of intra- versus inter-personal conflict on feelings of evaluative tension.

We adopted two approaches to addressing the conceptual issue of culture. First, measures of individual differences in independence and interdependence were collected. Second, individuals were recruited from either interdependent (Korea, Taiwan) or independent (USA) cultures. As such, we were able to ask whether 1) individual differences, regardless of the country of the participant, and 2) whether country of the participant, influenced the relationship of the source of conflict (inter- versus intra-) on feeling of evaluative tension. That is, we were able to assess how cultural differences potentially moderate the antecedent of ambivalence

using two different operationalizations of interdependence and independence.

The results are consistent with the hypotheses. Specifically, for individuals who are high in interdependence and low in independence (as assessed by individual differences) interpersonal conflict has a greater influence of feelings on evaluative tension than intrapersonal conflict, whereas for individuals who are high in independence and low in interdependence, intrapersonal conflict has a greater influence on feelings of evaluative tension than interpersonal conflict. Similarly, for individuals from interdependent countries, interpersonal conflict has a greater influence of feelings on evaluative tension than intrapersonal conflict, whereas for individuals from independent countries, intrapersonal conflict has a greater influence on feelings of evaluative tension than interpersonal conflict.

The value of this research has to do with broadening the conceptualization of ambivalence from a definition of conflicting positive and negative reactions to one of understanding ambivalence as the result of conflict with beliefs and norms consistent with cultural differences.

“The Role of Cultural Cognition in the Use of Contextual Cues in Product Quality Judgments”

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Quality evaluation drawn from extrinsic cues such as price, brand name, and store name play an important role in consumers' prepurchase evaluations of a product. Generally speaking, high price, good brand name, or positive store name connote better quality products to consumers. When consumers consider all three cues together, however, the findings of previous research suggest that the effect of store name on a product's perceived quality is statistically insignificant, whereas those of price and brand name are substantial (Rao and Monroe 1989).

These findings must be disappointing for retailers who have grappled with the task of maintaining a positive store name and image in a highly competitive retail environment. Still, the findings suggesting a minimal impact of store name have been verified only within Western cultures. We suggest that the impact of store name on product evaluation actually depends on consumers' self-construal.

For example, in an interdependent cultural context, people might be more prone to using cues such as store name to make their decisions. One reason might be that when an interdependent self-construal is salient, people tend to use contextual cues (Kuehnen, Hannover and Schubert 2001). Another might be that, to the extent that one's relations with others are salient due to an interdependent self-construal, consumers tend to be interested in socially visible information that will reflect favorably on their public image. Our research was not designed to distinguish these possibilities, only to assess the role of store cues in product evaluation in independent vs. interdependent cultural contexts.

In Study 1, we examined the effect of a store cue on product evaluation by choosing two cultures in which independent and interdependent self-construal are dominant. Specifically, we measured consumers' evaluations of running shoes using a 2 X 2 X 2 (i.e., high-low price, brand name, and store name) between-subjects design in both the U.S. and Korea. Supporting the hypotheses, the results revealed that the favorability of a store's name affected quality evaluation in the Korean sample but not the US sample. Further an interaction showed that when store image is low, even a good brand name could not enhance quality perceptions in the Korean sample. This is contrary to previous findings suggesting that the effect of brand name is the strongest among the three cues

and does not diminish under various cue conditions (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991). Our results suggest that previous findings regarding the insignificant effect of store name on brand perceptions may actually be culturally bounded.

In Study 2, we sought to replicate these effects by priming independent and interdependent self-construals among U.S. participants. Microwaves were the stimulus product and participants were presented with price and brand name along with either store name or a *Consumer Reports* type rating along a 5-star quality scale. Both price and brand name were fixed at a middling point, whereas the valence of store name and consumer 5-star-scale rating were varied. A statistically significant 2-way interaction emerged between self-construal prime and the use of store name ($F(1, 59)=3.11, p<.05$). That is, participants in the interdependent prime condition were more influenced by store name ($M=-.13$ vs. $.47$) than were those in the independent prime condition ($M=-.73$ vs. $.60$). However, as expected, there was no significant difference in the use of 5-star quality ratings information ($F(1,59)=.02, n.s.$) between independent ($M=.31$ vs. $.82$) and interdependent ($M=.27$ vs. $.60$) prime conditions. Thus, participants in the interdependent-priming condition were influenced by store name more than were those in the independent-priming condition, but this was not a general tendency to give greater consideration to any information.

We argue that an interdependent self-construal leads consumers to use store name as a cue because it enhances interest in socially visible information that will reflect favorably on one's public image. If this is correct, then one would expect store name also to be used as a cue under other circumstances that enhance interest in socially visible information. For products that convey symbolic information, for instance, store name may be used as a cue even when an independent self-construal is salient. In Study 3, therefore, we compared the use of store name with utilitarian vs. symbolic products. Between-subject factors were self-construal priming (independent vs. interdependent) and product types (utilitarian vs. symbolic). Microwaves and running shoes were determined as utilitarian and symbolic products respectively based on pretests. High versus low store name was a within-subject factor. For microwaves, a significant difference emerged across prime conditions in the use of store name ($F(1, 38)=2.9, p<.05$). Specifically, replicating Study 2, participants with interdependent priming were more influenced by store name ($M=-.05$ vs. $.58$) than those with independent priming ($M=.33$ vs. $.53$). For running shoes, however, the effect of store name did not depend on prime condition ($F(1, 35)<1, n.s.$); i.e., there was no difference in the effect of store name between interdependent ($M=.00$ vs. $.42$) and independent-primed participants ($M=-.22$ vs. $.50$). In short, when store name was considered relevant to consumers with an independent self-construal because the product carries symbolic meaning, differences across priming condition disappeared and consumers overall used store name in their product evaluation. Therefore, it appears that store name is used as a significant cue in product evaluation for consumers with salient interdependent self-construal because of their increased concern about social image.

“Service Encounters and Emotions across Individuals and across Cultures”

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The US economy has not only become more service oriented, but increasingly dependent on exporting these services. According to Starbucks' Chief Executive Orin Smith, the company's overseas outlets will eventually outnumber domestic stores. A company like Starbucks sells more than just a cup of coffee; it also sells a friendly

ambiance and positive emotional experience. However, just like many other CEO's nowadays, Mr. Smith realizes that what constitutes friendly ambiance and positive experiences varies from country to country because consumers are not the same in other countries, even if they speak the same language. Managers therefore recognize that it is important to study how cultural differences influence consumer emotional reactions to service experiences.

There also appears to be an increase in academics' interest in studying international differences in consumer behavior recently including recent calls for researchers to "break out of the North American box" (Gorn 1997). One area that has not received much attention of marketing academics is cross-cultural differences in consumer emotional experiences.

This research project is the first one to investigate the interactions of consumer emotions with cultural orientation variables in their impact on behavioral intentions variables, such as intentions to spread word of mouth, purchase intentions, and willingness to complain, all crucial variables in consumer behavior from both theoretical and managerial perspective.

Background

Individualism/collectivism, perhaps the most central dimension of cultural variables, has been used in marketing to understand how cultural differences affect various aspects of consumer behavior. Several recent analyses report that these constructs can be further differentiated in terms of horizontal (emphasizing equality) or vertical (emphasizing hierarchy) dimensions (Singelis et al. 1995, Triandis and Gelfand 1998). Literature in this area indicates that a person can score high or low on all four dimensions (Triandis and Gelfand 1998).

Methodology

To conduct our research, we constructed 8 scenarios about a trip to a local cafe, varying length of wait (longer or shorter than expected), responsibility for wait (service provider versus client), and equality of treatment (equal versus unequal treatment). We then randomly distributed the scenarios and written translated questionnaires to consumers in the US, Russia, and Argentina. The countries were selected because they vary widely on the collectivism/individualism dimensions.

Results

We predicted and found that the effects of length of wait on negative emotions (anger and guilt) and positive emotions (joyfulness) are moderated by consumers' cultural orientation. For example, the length of wait had a stronger effect on those who scored high on the vertical individualism dimension than those who scored low (more anger and less joyfulness). Most importantly, as hypothesized, we found that the effect of emotions on behavioral intentions is moderated by cultural orientation variables. For example, the collectivism dimensions moderated the negative effect of anger on the intention to keep patronizing the service provider, such that those who scored high on the collectivism dimensions were less likely to stop patronizing the service provider even when they were angry compared to those low on collectivism.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Effects of Framing on Magnitude Perceptions of Prices

Manoj Thomas, New York University

Vicki Morwitz, New York University

SESSION OVERVIEW:

It is widely accepted that the perceived magnitude of price plays an important role in product choice and consumer decisions. A question that is of interest to researchers in pricing is whether the perceived magnitude of the price is the same as the nominal magnitude of the price. In this session, we present and discuss research that addresses this question. The three papers presented in this session address the basic research question: What factors cause consumers' perceived price magnitude to differ from the nominal magnitude of the price? The first paper by Nunes and Drèze examines the effect of the currencies used to frame the price on consumers' reactions to that price. More specifically, this paper examines how firms can strategically use prices issued in combinations of currencies (e.g., dollars and miles or points), and how the firm can alter the distribution of these points as well as the reward levels to maximize loyalty and willingness to pay. The second paper by Redden, Williams and Fitzimons examines whether prices are framed as a partitioned price (e.g., base price plus separate charge for shipping and handling) or as one aggregate price (e.g., total price including shipping) affects consumers' perceptions of the price magnitude. Specifically, this paper focuses on the circumstances and the mediating variables that determine when partitioned prices lead to underestimation of the total product price. This paper suggests that consumers' expectations with regard to whether the price will be offered as a partitioned price, will moderate the effect of this framing on magnitude perceptions and choice. The third paper by Thomas and Morwitz examines how the left digit in a price exerts an undue effect on consumers' magnitude perceptions. Specifically, this paper examines whether changing the price of a product by one cent (which in turn changes the left digit of the price) can significantly alter the perceived magnitude of the price. This paper shows that even a one-cent change in price can impact perceived magnitude of the price under certain circumstances.

LONG ABSTRACTS

"The Pseudo-Sunk Cost Effect: How Varying Reward Levels Affects Prices in Alternative Currencies"

Joseph C. Nunes and Xavier Drèze

The immense popularity of loyalty programs has resulted in a variety of new "currencies" that people budget, save and spend much like money. For example, 100 million people worldwide collect frequent flier miles. After comparing the relevant figures with all of the notes and coins in circulation around the globe, the *Economist* (May 4, 2002, p. 62) proclaimed miles the "world's second biggest currency" after the dollar. American Express is in the midst of a marketing blitz touting how points earned in its *Membership Rewards* program have no expiration and offer the greatest selection of "must-have rewards." Yet, it is unclear how consumers value alternative currencies, or more specifically how reward redemption levels impact their valuations. As consumers are increasingly able to pay for goods and services such as airline travel, hotel stays and groceries in various combinations of currencies, understanding how shoppers respond to prices utilizing alternative currencies is becoming increasingly important to marketers.

Traditionally, consumers must accumulate enough of a particular currency (e.g., American Express Reward Points, Frequent Flier miles) to "earn" a reward. Previous research (Drèze and Nunes 2004) has outlined the conditions under which a combined-currency price, or a price issued in multiple currencies (e.g., \$39 plus 16,000 miles) is preferred to a price issued in one currency. This research explores how the firm can manipulate reward levels and the distribution of currencies in order to increase customer loyalty and steer preferences between combined-currency prices and prices assessed in a single currency.

We conducted a series of studies and presented three experiments. Study 1 tests the effect of increasing versus decreasing fungibility (i.e., the ability to spend various increments) on a consumer's drive to accumulate a currency (i.e., customer loyalty or retention) and choices regarding when and how to spend increments of that currency. Heath, Larrick and Wu (1999) have shown that people are willing to exert more effort as they approach their goal and less effort as they move away from a goal. Just as someone whose goal is to do 40 sit-ups would be expected to exert more effort to do their 39th sit-up than their 35th, 4,000 miles would mean more to someone with 20,000 miles than to someone with 10,000 miles, when the amount needed for a free ticket is 25,000 miles. We hypothesize that reward levels act as goals and that the marginal value of alternative currencies increases as consumers draw nearer to their goals. The result shows how the strategic setting of reward levels can affect the valuation of alternative currencies, and hence both (a) loyalty, and (b) the choice of pricing schedules when various options are issued in combinations of currencies.

Study 2 illustrates how bequeathing consumers with an endowment in an alternative currency can increase their propensity to make future purchases (loyalty) and the amount that they are willing to spend (willingness to pay). We find that endowing consumers with assets in a particular currency, while elevating the goal (the quantity of that currency that they must accumulate to earn a reward) commensurately, increases the marginal value of each unit of the currency. A sunk cost (Arkes and Blumer 1985) is traditionally associated with decision-makers reluctance to "waste" what they have allocated to a purpose, or to see progress (i.e., effort) towards a goal that they do not wish to discard. We demonstrate a similar effect when consumers are given assets in an alternative currency—they see these points or miles as progress, despite the fact that they are not truly earned and no effort was expended. Therefore someone given 500 points will work harder (spend more, or steer purchases) to reach 1,500 points than someone with 0 points will work to reach 1,000. The effect is mediated by the type of medium (purchases versus points) and the presence of an explanation for the endowment. The result is that the firm can strategically use endowments to boost loyalty (i.e., customer retention) while holding the revenue objective (goal in the alternative currency) constant.

In Study 3, we explore some traditional mental accounting phenomena that are robust with regard to dollars, and how consumers respond when analogous choices are presented in alternative currencies. The results reveal mixed support for the expected results given previous findings in mental accounting.

“Price Partitioning: No One Likes Surprises”

Joe Redden, Gavan Fitzsimons and Patti Williams

Marketers frequently break a product's price into two required components, such as \$70 plus \$10 shipping and handling. This practice has been referred to as partitioned pricing (Morwitz, Greenleaf, and Johnson 1998). The assumption is that product demand will increase when the price is presented as two separate components, as people will not accurately calculate the total cost and will make decisions based upon a lower perceived price. Since every firm does not present their prices this way in practice, there are likely conditions under which partitioning is not beneficial. While past research has investigated the phenomenon (e.g., Morwitz, et. al. 1998), questions remain regarding how consumers process this information and circumstances under which partitioned prices may be more or less beneficial to marketers. This research uses consumer expectations to explain when price partitioning can provide an advantage, and when partitioning can be detrimental.

Morwitz, Greenleaf, and Johnson (1998) have shown that consumers will increase product choice under a partitioned pricing regime. They attribute this to a lowered perceived cost due to either under-adjustments from the base price anchor, or the absence of any adjustment due to the cognitive effort required. Chakravarti, et. al. (2002) recently found that mental accounting helps explain different partitioning behaviors. By partitioning a specific attribute, marketers encourage a mental accounting comparison for that attribute and can position a product more favorably.

Although these results focus on the positive benefits of partitioning, a number of theories suggest that partitioning could have potential costs. First, people may view the additional surcharge as a loss, in which case prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) would suggest decreased product demand due to a segregation of losses. Second, marketers may trigger reactance (Brehm 1981) in consumers who feel their options have been reducing by forcing them to pay for an attribute they thought they were already getting. Third, an additional fee that is not typical for that product could increase the attention paid to the task (Goodstein 1993) and cause consumers to focus more on the price and exert the mental effort to perform the necessary addition.

When a customer expects the surcharge item to already be included in the base price, these potential costs will become more salient. Most of the existing partitioning studies have involved attributes which are customarily priced in a partitioned fashion (e.g., shipping, warranties). However, consumers will expect some attributes to be included with the base price, such as a fee for speaking with a bank teller or flying standby on a flight (*NY Times* Dec. 28, 2002). These expectations will be based upon previous experience with the category, the array of choices in a consideration set, etc. We have used this idea of expectations to explain existing results, as well as suggest moderating conditions and new effects.

A first study has found several key results supporting the expectation story. The study chose an ambiguous attribute (web features) to partition for the price of a cell phone. The expectations about whether this attribute should be in the base price were measured, rather than manipulated. Subjects always saw a control phone with a single lump-sum price and were randomly given a second phone that either had partitioning or a single lump-sum price of the same amount. The dependent variables were product choice likelihood and recall of total cost. Product choice was significantly lower than a combined price when price partitioning was not expected. Cost recalls suggest a reactance or attention mechanism at work as most recalled prices were near the base price or near the accurate total price (i.e., very few recalled prices were in between the base and total price). Further, a number of subjects appeared to mistake the partitioned price for an optional fee. If this misinterpre-

tation helps drive the partitioning effect, this suggests that partitioning may be particularly effective when the subject is not involved.

Two additional studies examine the mediating constructs of the partitioning-expectation interaction. Both of these studies retain product choice and cost recall as the dependent variables. The second study replicates the findings in our first study and explores the constructs mediating the results of the first study. The design is similar to the first study with additional emphasis on the required nature of the surcharge, as well as measures to determine the mediation of reactance and/or confusion. The third study manipulates consumer expectations by making partitioning in the choice set either the norm or the exception. This design provides some insight into the temporal and contextual nature of the partitioning expectations.

“Penny Wise and Pound Foolish: The Left Digit Effect in Perceptual Responses to Multi-Digit Numbers”

Manoj Thomas and Vicki Morwitz

The popularity of nine-ending price points amongst retailers has attracted researchers' attention as early as 1930. Past research suggests that using a nine ending price (e.g., \$1.99 instead of \$2.00) can have a significant impact on firms' profits (Schindler and Kibarian 1996, Blattberg and Neslin 1990, Stiving and Winer 1997). However, the cognitive process that leads to price ending effects remains enigmatic (Monroe and Lee 1999).

We conducted four experiments to examine how price endings affect numerical cognition processes. Results of study 1 suggest that nine endings in a product price reduce the perceived magnitude of the price relative to a reference price only when the left-most dollar digit changes. Study 2 shows that effects of nine endings in a price are moderated by the difference between the nine-ending price and reference price; nine-endings effects are *more likely* to manifest when the prices being compared are close to each other. Study 3 measures response times to confirm that the moderating effect of distance was mediated by cognitive load. Study 4 replicates this effect in a non-price domain, namely consumers' perception of quality ratings. Based on these four studies, we propose three properties of nine ending price cognition: the left digit effect, the distance effect and domain invariance.

The Left Digit Effect. The left digit effect refers to the property that underestimation of a nine ending price is more likely when the left-most digit of the nine ending price changes. Using a nine ending instead of a zero ending, for example \$2.99 instead of \$3.00, changes the dollar digit (from three to two) and it is this change in the left digit rather than the one cent drop that affects the magnitude perception of the price. The analog model of numerical cognition (Dehaene 1997) states that multi-digit number comparison entails two processes; first the different digits in the numbers are converted into holistic mental quantities represented on an internal analog scale and then these analog representations are compared. However, despite the fact that perceivers take into account all the digits in encoding the magnitude of a multi-digit number, due to left-to-right processing, at least in some situations, the left-most digit is likely to exert a greater influence on the encoded magnitude.

Distance Effect. The left-digit effect does not manifest always. Perceivers tend to anchor magnitudes of multi-digit numbers on the left digit only when the internal discriminability between the two numbers being compared is poor. Research in marketing suggests that price evaluation often, if not always, involves a comparison of two prices, a target price and a comparison standard (Adaval and Monroe 2002, Janiszewski and Lichtenstein 1999, Niedrich, Sharma and Wedell 2001, Winer 1988). However, before two numbers can be compared the numerical symbols have to be mapped on to the internal analog scale. This process of mapping from numerical

symbol to mental magnitudes imposes a cost on the speed of mental calculations when the numbers being compared are close to each other. The closer the numbers being compared, the greater is the difficulty in discriminating the numbers on the internal analog scale. Consequently, the closer the numbers being compared, the greater is the likelihood of the left digit effect.

Domain Invariance. Domain invariance refers to the property that the underestimation of nine-ending numbers is not restricted to the domain of prices; it manifests with other multi-digit numbers also. Past research has often attributed the popularity of nine ending prices to perpetuated retailing practices (Gabor 1977, Gabor and Granger 1964, Schindler 1991). Based on a survey of published material and informal conversations with consumers and retailers, Schindler (1991) proposed a list of fourteen meanings that price endings are likely to communicate to consumers. These meanings can be broadly classified into two groups: price-related meanings (such as “low price,” “discount price”), or meanings concerning non-price attributes of the product or retailer (such as “low quality”). However, if consumers’ favorable response to nine ending prices is solely on account of the images of ‘discount’, ‘low price’ etc. evoked by these prices, then these effects should be confined to the domain of prices. On the contrary, if these effects are, at least partly, due to the influence of left-to-right processing during the magnitude encoding of multi-digit numbers, then these effects should remain invariant to changes in domain. Drawing on the premise that left to right processing is a fundamental characteristic of multi-digit encoding, we predict that left digit effect and its interaction with distance effect will manifest in all nine ending numbers and not just prices. (It may be noted that we are not ruling out the image effects phenomenon in price cognition; rather, our suggestion is that nine ending numbers can be underestimated even when these numbers are not associated with images of low magnitudes.)

The question whether consumers respond differently to a price that is a cent lower than the nearest round figure is interesting from a theoretical as well as managerial perspective. From a theoretical perspective, the answer to this question will contribute to the literature on cognitive responses to numerical stimuli. The answer will be germane to researchers debating whether numbers are processed analogically or digitally (Dehaene, Dupoux and Mehler, 1990; Hinrichs, Yurko and Hu, 1981).

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Memory Accessibility and Product Judgment

Stijn M. J. van Osselaer, Erasmus University

SESSION OVERVIEW

Three papers were presented that investigate the effects of accessibility of information in memory on product judgment.

The first paper, by Tybout, Sternthal, Malaviya, Bakamitson, and Park, addresses a paradoxical set of results. Prior research suggests that asking consumers to generate multiple reasons to buy a product can have both positive and negative effects on product judgments. The authors investigate the conditions under which these effects occur. Their results show that the effects of generating reasons are moderated by the accessibility of the reasons in memory. When the reasons are highly accessible or inaccessible, asking for more reasons prompts more favorable judgments. Between these extremes in accessibility, asking for more reasons prompts less favorable judgments. The authors argue that these results are driven by the independent operation of two memory processes—one involves using the content of the retrieved information as a basis for judgment (i.e., evaluation is based on the diagnosticity of the accessible information), while the other involves monitoring of the retrieval process and then making a judgment based on how easy it is to retrieve the information (i.e., evaluation is based on the accessibility of the information). When accessibility of reasons in memory is very low, consumers do not perceive ease of retrieval to be diagnostic of their feelings about a product. In such a situation, product judgments are based on the content of the information available (with more positive information being retrieved when asked to generate more rather than fewer reasons). When accessibility of reasons in memory is very high, retrieval ease is again not perceived as diagnostic and product judgments are again based on the content of the information considered. Between these levels of accessibility, ease of retrieval is perceived as diagnostic and the difficulty of retrieving many reasons has a negative effect on product judgments. Four experiments support these hypotheses.

In the second paper, Vanhouche and van Osselaer report four experiments showing that attributes that often bias product judgments can also enhance the accuracy of product judgments by making individual consumption experiences more accessible in memory. Specifically, the authors show that adding product information (e.g., irrelevant attribute information) that initially biases product evaluations because consumers expect it to be correlated with product quality even when it is not, can actually make those evaluations more accurate over time. This happens because the added information does not merely function as a general heuristic cue that biases judgment. It can also help consumers access specific product experiences in memory. The authors find that this is not only the case when the biasing cue and actual quality are completely uncorrelated. For example, when price and quality were positively correlated across products but one product featured a high price and low quality, post-experience quality judgments for the latter product were more accurate than when no price cue was added. Finally, the authors also find that potentially-biasing cues, such as price, may have an even stronger exemplar-memory-enhancing effect than cues that consumers do not expect to be related to product quality. This might be the case because violations of quality expectations lead to better encoding of experiences in memory.

In the third paper, four experiments by Lee and Labroo examine the role of memory accessibility in yet a different way. The authors investigate how accessibility of the target product may serve as the basis of product judgment. Specifically, the authors

suggest that accessibility of a product in memory may be defined in terms of how easy it can be recognized (i.e., perceptual fluency) or how quickly it comes to mind (i.e., conceptual fluency). They further propose that consumers may develop a more favorable attitude toward a product when the product becomes more accessible in memory, either perceptually or conceptually. Their results across three experiments show that enhancing perceptual or conceptual fluency of the target increases liking for the target. In addition, the experiments provide evidence that conceptual and perceptual fluency effects on affective responses are additive. Finally, the authors present results suggesting that whereas perceptual fluency always has a positive effect on consumer attitudes, conceptual fluency may lead to less favourable attitudes when negatively valenced associations are being primed.

Wyer provided an overview of research on accessibility and judgment and pointed out the papers' contributions and outstanding questions within this context. Specifically, he explored how the direct effect of ease of retrieval and the content effect in the paper by Tybout et al. might combine to influence judgment. Do they jointly influence judgments, with more influence of the process that is stronger in the particular context, or do the processes combine according to a race model in which the winning process "takes all"? Wyer pointed out that Vanhouche and van Osselaer's results may be dependent on the type of goal participants had during processing and on dependent measures—recall of the quality of previously-encountered products versus judgments of those products' current desirability. In addition, he asked whether the added cue (e.g., price, irrelevant attribute) had a direct effect on memory or made participants encode other product information better. Finally, Wyer related Lee and Labroo's research on conceptual fluency to the activation of narratives in episodic memory, pointing out that narrative representations of information can often have stronger effects on judgment than information presented in other forms. If conceptual fluency is based in narrative episodic memory, perceptual fluency effects seems to be based in semantic memory processes, explaining the additivity of the two types of fluency effects.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Diagnosing Identity: Exploring the Complex Relationship between Consumer Identities, Motivation, and Health-Related Behaviors

Sonya A. Grier, Stanford University

H. Rika Houston, California State University, Los Angeles

SESSION OVERVIEW

Consumer research has demonstrated the link between identities and consumer behavior, and we have long known that people use products for self-expressive reasons (e.g. Gardner and Levy 1959). However, less attention has focused on *how* people's identities motivate identity consistent behavior. The papers in this session examined the motivational forces that underlie different kinds of identities and how these forces motivate the consumer towards identity consistent behavior or drive them away from identity inconsistent behavior. Further, all three papers focused on the relationship between identity and behavior in the *health domain*, an economically important and socially relevant domain that receives limited theoretical attention. The three papers in the session took different approaches to considering identity, the significance of the source of the identity, and how these identity "meanings" may influence consumer attitudes and practices related to their health and well-being.

Rika Houston examined the macro identity of "motherhood." Motherhood is an identity that reflects an aspirational, role transitional, "desired self" that many women adopt in North American culture. Her presentation described the emotional, financial, and medical health of consumers facing the cultural dilemma of involuntary infertility during their quest to attain the desired social identity of "mother." By integrating the analysis of historical and cultural text, secondary data, and ethnographic fieldwork, she presented a conceptual framework for understanding how the cultural-determined identity of motherhood affects consumers' identity consistent behaviors in the infertility marketplace.

Michael Basil and Edward Maibach examined how people's behaviors reflect an avoidance of a particular identity through an examination of consumer obesity. Being "obese" represents a "feared self" that is antithetical to the proliferation of popular culture driven idealized self-imagery. Their research created attitudinal and behavioral profiles of people who are obese in order to identify cognitive prototypes that underlie an avoidance-type of motivational force. Their nationally representative results suggest significant behavioral differences among those who are objectively vs. self-identified as overweight, and pose significant implications for interventions to curb the nation's obesity epidemic.

Sonya Grier described her research with Amy Marks that investigated how multiple identities influence women's smoking behavior. Their research utilized both qualitative and quantitative research to identify the key determinants of smoking behavior among women in South Africa, and the role of culture as a protective factor. Their results illustrated the process consumers use to manage the motivations generated by multiple, sometimes conflicting identities on behavior. The discussion leader for the session, Americus Reed II, made integrating comments and promoted discussion between the participants and the audience in order to allow a larger understanding of the topic to emerge.

Overall, the three presentations and the discussion that followed provided insight into how the motivations inherent in attaining, avoiding or managing identities influence health-related behaviors. The session's methodological pluralism, incorporation of prior research, the social relevance of the topic, and the provocative Q&A session contributed to a more holistic understanding and

provided a conceptual platform for those in attendance to truthfully address the complex relationship between health, identity and consumer behavior.

ABSTRACTS

"The Motherhood Mandate: Gender, Identity, and Consumption in the Infertility Marketplace"

H. Rika Houston, California State University, Los Angeles

This paper explores the emotional, financial, and medical health of consumers facing the dilemma of involuntary infertility. The significance of this dilemma cannot be understated since motherhood has been viewed as the primary vehicle through which women have formed their identities and found their "place" in contemporary North American culture since the beginning of the 19th century (Arendell 2000, Bassin 1994). Indeed, the intensity of this cultural mandate is so strong that the state of involuntary non-motherhood has now become medicalized through the birth and proliferation of a multi-billion dollar infertility industry since the 1970s.

After making the life-altering decision to become a parent in the first place, the inability to do so after repeated attempts seems to contribute to a slow downward spiral of emotions exacerbated by high price tags, low success rates, and a growing list of real and potential medical complications. From an emotional perspective, the 'infertile' are described as sharing the typically negative characteristic of 'desperation.' For example, ethnographic interviews of in-vitro fertilization consumers conducted by Franklin (1997) and ethnographic field work conducted by this author clearly reveal the overwhelming desperation and uncertainty experienced by female consumers of infertility products and services. Involuntarily infertile women, already burdened by self-doubts and desperation, often express further resentment at the public expectation of friends and family members who repeatedly ask them to explain the details of their personal dilemma or to justify their relentless quest to become a 'biological' mother when other alternatives such as adoption or non-motherhood exist (Franklin 1997, Kirkman 2001, Wischmann et. al 2001). With such a heavy emotional burden, it is easy to understand the psychological motivation for such consumers to pay large sums of money in the infertility marketplace.

From a financial perspective, accurate cost estimates for infertility procedures are difficult to obtain due to limited regulation and wide variations in cost associated with factors such as the age of the consumer and the complexity and duration of the required treatments. However, 'standard' in-vitro fertilization (IVF) treatments alone can average around \$8,000 to \$10,000 for the first cycle of treatment to a total of \$50,000 to \$150,000 for a series of cycles that result in a successful pregnancy and a live birth (American Society for Reproductive Medicine 2002, Kershner 1996, Moore 1996, Stephen 1999). Additional procedures, usually necessary when the infertile consumer is a woman over the age of 35, often add thousands of dollars to these average costs. Needless to say, the price tags are considerably high even though some infertility clinics offer 'money-back' guarantees if treatment does not result in a live birth (Schmittlein and Morrison 1999). A financial cost versus benefit analysis of the assisted reproductive procedure price tag

presents a perplexing question that can only be explained by the deeply embedded psychological motivation that potentially drives such consumers to conform to the cultural mandate of 'motherhood'.

Even after the emotional and financial challenges are confronted, the growing list of potential medical complications associated with infertility products and services is formidable. First and foremost, pregnancies facilitated by the consumption of assisted reproductive technologies are more likely to result in multiple births and multiple births are at considerably greater risk for medical complications (Schieve et al. 1999, Seifer et al. 2001). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2000) and The National Center for Health Statistics (1999) reported that from 1980 through 1997, the annual number of twin births rose 52% while the annual number of triplet or higher-order multiple births rose over 400%. Compared to singleton births, a twin is seven times more likely and a triplet is over 20 times more likely to die in the first month of life. Premature birth, which occurs in 50% of twin pregnancies and 90% of triplet pregnancies, is associated with an increased risk of respiratory distress syndrome (RDS), intra-cranial hemorrhage, cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness, low birth weight, and neonatal morbidity and mortality. Maternal complications of multiple gestations only complicate the matter. They include premature labor, placental abnormalities, maternal hemorrhage, pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes, anemia, and other complications resulting from the cesarean birth that is standard practice with multiple gestation (American Society for Reproductive Medicine 2001). The most troubling unanswered question, however, is whether or not the ovulation drugs used by millions of infertile female consumers will increase their risk of developing ovarian cancer later in life (Hesselberth 2000, Kershner 1996). Although there still has not been any conclusive cancer research related to the hyper-stimulation of ovaries with ovulation drugs, the Food and Drug Administration now requires many fertility drugs to carry a warning that they may increase the risk of ovarian cancer. In summary, the multi-faceted combination of emotional, financial, and medical challenges involved with the consumption of products and services in the infertility marketplace bear witness to the strong impact that the culturally fostered identity of 'mother' has upon the health behaviors of women who find themselves caught in the quandary of this complex dynamic.

Through the use of secondary data, a comprehensive analysis of historical and cultural texts on the history of assisted reproductive technologies, and ongoing ethnographic field work, the author proposes a conceptual framework for understanding this timely gaze into the social and technological construction of consumer identity and their related health behaviors. Results point to existing public policy to address the needs and rights of consumers in the infertility marketplace, as well as possible avenues for future public policy.

"Obesity: Government Definitions Versus Self-Identity on Consumer Attitudes, Perceptions, and Behaviors"

*Michael Basil, University of Lethbridge
Edward W. Maibach, Porter Novelli*

The prevalence of obesity has increased dramatically in the United States recently (Flegal, Carroll, Kuczmarski & Johnson, 1998; Galuska, Serdula, Pamuk, Siegel & Byers, 1996; Kuczmarski, Flegal, Campbell & Johnson, 1994; NHLBI, 1998). Being overweight increases the risk of hypertension, lipid disorders, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, respiratory problems, and certain cancers (NHLBI, 1998). The total costs approaches \$100 billion annually

(Wolf & Colditz, 1998). From a marketing perspective, the most important questions to answer about obesity revolve around people's current beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Do people perceive themselves to be overweight or obese? Do people see themselves to be at risk as a result of their weight? Do they feel self confident in their ability to do something about their weight? Only to the extent that people feel efficacious should we expect them to act. If people do not feel confident regarding things they can do to control their weight, the starting point should be an effort to build efficacy. This research explores these questions by examining the attitudes and behaviors of those who are objectively overweight with those who are not objectively overweight but self-identify that way.

The majority of the data for this study are from Porter Novelli's *Healthstyles* survey, which is administered annually. For each of the focal years (1995, 1996 and 1996) the survey received a response rate of at least 70%, and sample sizes included approximately 3000 individuals. In addition, data from Porter Novelli's 2002 *ConsumerStyles* was also used. The mean reported weight was 172 pounds (188 for men, 160 for women, $F [1,8602]=842$, $p<.001$). The calculated body mass index (BMI) was 27.3 (27.3 for men, 27.2 for women, $F [1, 8602]=0.49$, $p>.10$). This compares closely to NHANES-III and BRFSS data (Flegal et al., 1998; Kuczmarski et al., 1994, 1997; Galuska et al., 1996). Key analyses compared objective and subjective evaluations of obesity on a variety of psychological and behavioral differences.

First, people who are obese by government standards tend to perceive themselves as overweight. However, there are a considerable number of people who are overweight by government standards but do not describe themselves as being at least 20 pounds overweight. In addition, 12 percent of people who are not overweight estimated themselves to be at least 20 pounds overweight. With regard to attitudinal differences, the results show that objective obesity level shows a strong positive relationship with perceptions of health risk and weaker negative relationships with the importance of life satisfaction and perceptions of physical fitness as attractive. The results show that objective obesity level shows a weak negative relationship with confidence in maintaining a low-fat diet and with exercising regularly, but a strong negative relationship with confidence in staying thin or losing weight. With regard to questions of actual behaviors, the results show a weak negative relationship between the objective level of obesity and peoples' fruit and vegetable consumption and moderate relationships with days per week of moderate and strenuous physical activity. This relationship gets stronger, however, using people's self-identification of being overweight. In this case the behaviors are more strongly related to identification as overweight than the government categories.

Addressing again the issue of self-confidence, is the determinant of confidence a person's objective obesity level, their subjective identification as overweight, or from people's behavior? In this case the results show that the largest predictor of people's confidence in being able to maintain a low-fat diet show is their previous experience with low fat eating. The second largest predictor of confidence is a person's age, such that older people are more confident in these abilities. The analysis of people's confidence in being able to exercise regularly shows that experience with moderate exercise is the largest predictor of confidence. The second largest predictor of confidence is their current level of strenuous exercise. The analysis of people's confidence in being able to stay thin or lose weight shows that current obesity level is the largest predictor of their current level of confidence. The second largest predictor of confidence is their current level of strenuous exercise. The third largest predictor is their current level of moderate activity.

In sum, all of the analyses demonstrate that the largest predictor of self-confidence in being able to maintain a low fat diet, exercise, or lose weight is their current status on that behavior. These data appear to closely follow trends observed elsewhere. In general, almost 60% of the sample can be categorized as overweight. Although overweight people generally know they are overweight, suggesting that the message of what constitutes overweight has reached this population. With increasing obesity, people's life satisfaction declines, they see physical activity as less important and less attractive, they have slightly less confidence in being able to maintain a low fat diet, slightly less confidence in being able to exercise regularly, but much less confidence in being able to lose weight or keep it off. And while objective obesity was related to feeling at physical risk as a result of their weight, the subjective evaluation of being overweight was more important. Obese people express an interest in low fat foods, but appear skeptical that it will help them lose or keep off weight, especially as their level of obesity increases. With regard to eating habits, increased levels of obesity do not appear to relate to a higher level of consumption of fruits and vegetables, perhaps even a slight decrease in fruit and vegetable consumption. Finally, increasing levels of obesity relate to lower levels of moderate and strenuous physical activity. Initial results suggest that in most cases the self-identification as overweight has a stronger relationship with attitudes and behaviors than the government BMI categories. Additional analysis is in progress to compare the identification as being overweight with eating and exercise behaviors.

“Identity as Motivation For A Non-Smoking Lifestyle: The Role of Cultural and Health Identity in Women’s Smoking Behavior”

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Consumer behavior has long argued that people use products as a form of self-expression (Gardner and Levy, 1955; Levy 1959), highlighting the relationship of identity to behavior. Smoking, for example, is one behavior that is typically marketed as a way to influence one's identity. Tobacco companies have spent billions in the last century to make their products social icons that people use to communicate who they are or want to be. Much of advertising content tries to link different “identities” or lifestyles to different brands of cigarettes, so people can find one that expresses just what they want to be and say. Thus, a smoking lifestyle has embedded within it a deeper level usage of the cigarette and its smoking to express personal meanings publicly (Marks, 1997).

Identity has been posited to provide implicit rules for actions that influence identity consistent behavior (Terry, Hogg, and White, 1999). Recent work on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides growing empirical evidence for the predictive effects of identity on understanding consumer intentions and behavior (Terry, Hogg, and White, 1999; Sparks and Guthrie, 1998; Conner and McMillan, 1998). Our research uses TRA and TPB constructs as an organizing framework and integrates literatures on social identity, gender and culture, to examine the link between identity, norms, attitudes and smoking behavior with a focus on understanding the underlying process(es) that drive effects. Since people have multiple identities that may differentially affect a given domain, the research examines two types of identities: a) *cultural identity* (an individual's perception of membership in a cultural group and the value placed on that membership), and b) *health conscious identity* (an individual's perception of self as one concerned about health-related practices). The research also takes advantage of the research context to focus

on group level cultural norms, in contrast to the TRA/TPB focus on more individualized subjective norms (Terry et al, 1999). Two forms of cultural norms are examined (Cialdini, Reno and Kallgren, 1990; Povey, et al, 2000): perceived ‘injunctive norms’ concerning cultural approval or disapproval of smoking and ‘descriptive norms’ entailing perceptions of relevant others’ smoking.

Our basic premise is that identity should be a significant predictor of smoking attitudes and behavior to the extent that a particular self-definition is an important part of a woman's self-concept. We develop specific hypotheses regarding the relationship of multiple identities, multiple norms, attitudes and behavior with a focus on understanding the mechanisms underlying the influence of identity on behavior. These issues are examined in a context where identities are in flux—black women living in townships ringing a metropolitan center in South Africa. Although black females in South Africa comprise 40.5% of the population (Leholhla, 2002), they have one of the lowest rates of tobacco consumption in South Africa (Yach, Saloojee, and MacIntyre, 1992; Reddy, et al, 1996; Steyn et al., 1997). In particular, we focus on tobacco manufacturers' increased targeted marketing efforts that are aimed at exploiting black women's changing identities to alter their traditional non-smoking lifestyle.

As suggested by prior research (e.g. Montano, Kasprk and Taplin (1997), our quantitative investigation was built upon prior qualitative research (Marks and Ratheb 1998) which employed in-depth, open-ended elicitation interviews as well as focus group interviews to identify the behavioral outcomes, referents, facilitators and constraints relevant to smoking behavior. The rich phenomenological understanding of the targets and their relationship to smoking/non-smoking gained from the qualitative work was used to design a comprehensive survey to identify the key determinants of women's orientation toward and use of cigarettes. The questionnaire was designed taking into account variations in respondents' education levels. Key constructs included cultural beliefs and personal attitudes about smoking, cultural identity, health conscious identity, perceptions of cultural injunctive and descriptive norms, and exposure to marketing activities. After a pretest, the survey was administered in the local language, Xhosa, to a stratified cluster sample of black women from Cape Town area townships, resulting in a respondent sample of 1314, with 959 non-smokers and 355 smokers.

Two stage logistical regression analysis indicates that both cultural and health conscious identities serve as significant predictors of behavior independently of other TRA/TPB variables and that they significantly improve the model's ability to classify respondents as smokers versus non-smokers. The first model using TRA/TPB variables classified 86.7% of the respondents into smoking versus non-smoking [-2LL=768.428, $X^2=643.140$, 4 df, $p<.000$], with the odds ratios showing attitude to contribute the most to the model (1.517), followed by injunctive cultural norms (1.133) and descriptive norms about friends' smoking (.353). Adding the cultural and health identity variables significantly improved the model's ability to classify smoking behavior to 92.1% [-2LL=638.580, $X^2=772.987$, 6 df, $p<.000$, change in -2LL of 129.848, 2 df, $p<.000$], with the odds ratios showing attitude to still contribute the most to the model (1.596), followed by health identity (.802), cultural identity (.54) and then descriptive norms about friends' smoking (.415). The addition of the identity measures rendered cultural norms insignificant, and since the identity and norms variables are correlated, further analyses of the interactions will investigate their joint effect on smoking, with particular interest in the relative effect of individual level identity (health) versus social level identity (cultural).

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Clean and Dirty: Playing with Boundaries of Consumer's Safe Havens

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ABSTRACT

The marketplace, with its continuously increasing symbolic nature and infinitely many alternative consumption choices, poses a disorderly and threatening environment for consumers. This conceptual paper discusses the ways in which consumers magically create, eliminate, or shift many boundaries surrounding them through rituals and practices related with cleanliness in order to construct a safe 'home' in an otherwise threatening environment.

Rituals and practices related with cleanliness can be observed in many spheres of everyday social life. We buy products and services to clean our bodies, clothes, and homes. Cleaning products industry continuously introduces "new and improved" products. These products range from basic consumer goods like Colgate toothpastes, Procter and Gamble cleaning agents, and Johnson and Johnson shampoos and bath products, to more high-end designer products like Nilfik's Advance Hip Vacuum Cleaner, Caldrea's Green Tea Patchouli Linen Spray or pure silk cheesecloth dusters, to all natural 'green' products by companies like The Body Shop or Lush. Global detergent producers such as Unilever spend huge amounts of money and time on marketing research to determine the preferred and perceived degree of whiteness and cleanliness in different cultures. Removing dirt is not only an important concern for home and personal care but also for the environment—such as chemical and industrial pollutants. Food products advertise the absence of impure additives and preservatives. Yet, dirt can also become a medium of play for consumers wishing to become part of nature (Belk and Ger forthcoming). These are among the examples that indicate the daily significance of cleanliness in consumption. Yet, to our knowledge, consumer researchers have not studied this topic.

Cleaning practices and rituals are deeply and closely linked with cultural categories and their significations (Ger 1999). Cultural categories, invisible to the social actors, are constantly substantiated so that the world is constructed to conform to the imagined world (McCracken 1999). This substantiation of the social world can be through commodities or practices and rituals of consumption. For example, grooming rituals are not only performed for hygienic reasons, but also as part of a body language and a social communicative action (Rook and Levy 1983). In the market place, where human relationships come to be represented more and more through meanings embedded in goods produced for sale there is massive overproduction of commodity signs. The meanings governing the social world do not only reside in the commodities per se, but are also a matter of practices that make use of the symbolic (Denzin 2001; Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Schor and Holt 2000). McCracken (1999) refers to these practices and rituals as social actions aimed at the manipulation of the cultural meanings for the purposes of communication and categorization.

We argue that rituals and practices related to the concepts of clean and dirty have an underlying role in this process of communication and categorization as they obliterate, create, or shift the boundaries of the geo-social maps of individuals. We define the geo-social map as a map of the imagined location of the consumer in the social. Social life is established around boundaries. Through categorization and communication, the consumer places him/herself and others in the geo-social map with respect to the boundaries depicting his/her social life world. The point of departure of our

paper is the work of Douglas (1991). Douglas maintains that the social world has a structure made up of borders and social actors perceive everything according to these schemata. Within this contention dirt is essentially disorder and eliminating it helps organize the environment. Social actors, who have been alienated (Miller 1987) or even deterritorialized (Deleuze and Guattari 1983) through capitalist marketplace dynamics, try to objectify (Miller) or re-territorialize (Deleuze and Guattari) their social relationships through magical rituals and practices. In that process, consumers' practices engage with the meanings of cleanliness in order to locate themselves and others on their geo-social maps, defining a safe haven, whether at home, work or play, in a threatening environment.

Cleanliness and dirt have been argued to be of great historical importance in setting up, obliterating, or shifting boundaries between the savage and the civilized, peasant and bourgeois, and the lower and the upper classes in the Western world during the civilization and industrialization process (Davidoff 1995; Elias 1995; Hoy 1995; Huxley 1986; Ross 1996; Vigarello 1985). The notions of clean and dirty have also been of great importance in Eastern societies. For example, cleanliness plays a key role in Hindu caste relations. The upper castes have been distinguished by an unconditional recognition that they are ritually clean. These distinctions are so radical that sometimes even touching or being seen together is forbidden as the dirty lower caste may contaminate the upper clean castes (e.g., Bergel 1962). Notions of cleanliness also have significance in Islam, which specifies how and when people should clean themselves as well as the rituals of cleaning the deceased before the burial.

In the contemporary disorderly world of cultural meanings, the notions of clean and dirty play an important role in determining the daily consumption practices of the social actor who tries to order his/her social world. Order-making practices and rituals establish consumers' locations in their social maps by making statements about boundaries. Eliminating dirt is a creative effort to re-organize or re-order the social life world to make it conform to an imagined geo-social map.

After providing a brief historical background and clarifying what we mean by "clean" and "dirty", we conceptually explore how consumption practices of clean and dirty negotiate this elusive map and its boundaries. We suggest that boundaries between inside and outside, upper and lower classes, familiar and unfamiliar, and culture and nature appear, disappear and shift through the everyday rituals and practices of 'clean' and 'dirty,' defining a safe haven.

MEANINGS OF CLEAN AND DIRTY

The first entry in the Webster Dictionary for the word clean is 'free from dirt or pollution' and 'free from contamination or disease.' Other definitions are 'unadulterated, pure' and 'free from flaws;' 'free from moral corruption or sinister connections of any kind' and 'free from offensive treatment of sexual subjects and from the use of obscenity;' and 'free from error or blemish.' Webster defines 'clean' with respect to its antonym. The entries for 'dirty' also follow the same style: 'not clean or pure;' that which 'containing impurities;' 'morally unclean or corrupt;' 'indecent, vulgar;' and 'not clear and bright.' Consistent with the Saussurian notion that language is a system of differences, Webster defines clean and dirty in relation to each other, whereby 'clean' gains meaning only with respect to 'dirty'.

In a pilot study in Turkey we find that when people think about 'clean' and 'dirty' they draw their understandings from two realms: conceptual and material. Conceptual understandings are about abstract and ideological issues such as purity, sacredness, soul, nature, beauty, feelings, love, mind, and the world at large. For example, the notions of the purity of a newborn baby or unconditional love are regarded as 'clean', whereas disturbing the balance of the world and the lack of sensitivity to world issues are interpreted as being 'dirty'. Material understandings, on the other hand, take on a more immediate, every day perspective, such as cleanliness and dirtiness of the body, clothing, food, house, and the environment.

This conceptual/material relationship is also evident in Delaney's (1991) ethnography on family, kinship, and social relations in a Turkish village. Villagers give much greater importance to cleanliness in a conceptual sense (e.g. purity, sacredness) than the cleanliness of their material surroundings, except inside their homes. For example, they consider the road that links their village to the big city to be 'bula?ık' (not clean/pure) as it opens the village up to the dirtiness of the city, while the dusty village roads covered with mud, animal defecation, and garbage are not a concern for cleanliness.

Hence, not only the conceptual and material meanings and experiences of clean and dirty differ with respect to the borders existing in the social realm, they also locate, establish, and obliterate these borders according to different social realms.

HISTORICAL ROLE OF CLEANLINESS AND DIRTINESS IN SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Cleanliness has been conceptualized as a reflection of the civilization process (Elias 1995; Vigarello 1985). Analyses of the changing attitudes towards cleanliness since the Middle Ages indicate that, as the means of distinction of nobility and the proof of ancestry played a diminishing role, manners became the differentiating element among social classes in modernizing France. Cleanliness, as part of these behaviors and manners, became synonymous with *civilisé*, by which "civil" people wished to designate "the specific quality of their own behavior, and by which they contrasted the refinement of their own social manners, their "standard," to the manners of simpler and socially inferior people" (Elias 1995, p. 32). Therefore, being visible, and expressed as a refinement of behavior, personal space, and of self-discipline, cleanliness became a norm not only of the individual but also of the social, depicting the history of cleanliness as the history of the pressure of civilization on the world of personal space. The authority figures in the perception of cleanliness in the seventeenth century France were not scholars or hygienists, but rather the authors of manuals of etiquette and experts in manners. This displacement of the basis of authority highlights the social communicative function of cleanliness, rather than its individual hygienic functions. The history of cleanliness is thus seen not as a history concerning hygienic practices, but rather as a social history from aristocracy to bourgeoisie, a history of changing structures in social life during the civilization era in France (Vigarello 1985).

Davidoff (1995) who studied the pursuit of and meanings given to cleanliness throughout the 19th and 20th centuries in Western Europe maintains that it was not cleanliness per se but the meanings ascribed to cleanliness that were vital, for they realized as well as symbolized the need to establish status through deference, order and ritual. The function of the pursuit of cleanliness, she argues, is to impose order on disorder, to transform the anarchy of raw material into acceptable cultural artifacts, to maintain the boundaries between nature and civilization. During this process of boundary definition and maintenance, patterns of consumption had

been one of the most common markers of status definition (Davidoff 1995).

In the USA, from the pre-Civil War era to the 1950s, the society transformed from 'dreadfully dirty' to 'cleaner than clean'—an obsession with cleanliness (Hoy 1995). Hoy argues that this transformation is based on an assimilation process, the attempts to persuade the masses to become American, rather than a simple care for hygiene. America, in the course of this transition, came to link being clean with being respectable, socially responsible, and healthy. This view also emphasizes the symbolic nature of acts of cleanliness. Taking Vigarello's (1985) accounts on the transition from aristocracy to bourgeoisie a step further, Hoy (1995) suggests that the pursuit of cleanliness was critical in the development of a middle class during the industrialization and urbanization process in the United States. She argues that clean and classy went together in this process and middle-classes differentiated themselves from the lower classes through cleanliness.

Huxley's (1986) essay "Hyperion To A Satyr" illustrates the symbolic importance of cleanliness for class differentiation. Focusing on dirt in the history of human existence and analyzing dirt's effect on creating class barriers, Huxley talks about the need to segregate oneself from others deemed pathetic, smelly, and filthy. Reflecting on a time when, while at the beach, he came across thousands of condoms scattered on the sand, probably coming from a sewer not far away, he flashes back to the times when dirt was a normal and intended part of society. He asserts that the segregation between those who felt they were less stinky and others intensified over time as dirt and stink started to be considered bad and the rich began to wash themselves. This distancing, according to Huxley, started with one substance, dirt; the largest cause of discrimination is argued to be based on the connection in the human mind between dirt and people of a lower social class (Wilson 2001).

As cleanliness became a visible sign of social structures, around 1915, Dadaism emerged as a critical and revolutionary avant-garde movement, trying to destroy these structures. Frankl (1992) argues that the Dadaist cult climaxes in the undoing of "the separation between the clean and the dirty, between those who have freed themselves from anal fixations and avoid contact with dirty matter—the clean and superior people—and those who make themselves dirty, soil themselves in the course of their labors" (p. 172). Dadaists provide a social criticism and seek to obliterate the distinction between the upper and lower classes by breaking down the distinction between the clean and the dirty. As art is often considered 'cleaner' and 'higher' than the rest of the world, Dadaists try to show that art can be just as dirty as, or even dirtier than, the world. In their effort to sweep all divisions away Dadaists blur the boundary between cleanliness and dirtiness (Kuspit 2001). This resembles the medieval rituals of folk carnival which Bakhtin (1965) argues are intentionally grotesque and based on the vulgar body to create a world oppositional to the official one, liberating individuals from the structures of social life.

Practices and meanings of cleanliness are linked not only to social structures within a society but also to international structural relations. Analyzing the modernization process from the point of view of hygiene, Ross (1996) argues that the new cult of cleanliness that the French culture faced after the Second World War is a part of an ideology of consumption that is at work within the process of turning to American-style mass-consumption habits. Similarly, Barthes (1972) maintains that what the French children of the war yearn for—*fringale*—is cleanliness, and what they need is purity. Observations on the symbolic rather than functional cleanliness in decolonializing France suggest that cleanliness also symbolizes being washed of all the stains left behind from colonial times (Ross 1996).

These accounts of academic, literary, and art works indicate that cleanliness and dirtiness are important factors in identity formation, class differentiation, and international social structures—in both bringing people together and dividing them apart. However, the contemporary social structures are very fluid and fuzzy. The unstructured, disorderly social life worlds based on the ever-changing cultural categories demand a way for the consumers to make a clean exit out of this mess.

MAGICAL RITUALS AND PRACTICES OF CLEAN AND DIRTY IN CONSUMER SOCIETY

Contemporary life consists of discontinuities, pluralities, chaos, instabilities, constant changes, fluidities, and paradoxes in which both symbolic production and consumption are major areas of societal participation (e.g. Firat and Venkatesh 1995). Culture, language, aesthetics, symbolic representations, and literary expressions that are central to the current market dynamics contribute to this fluid disorder. In the contemporary consumer society, “in place of a secure order of values and social positions, there is a bewildering variety and fluidity of values, roles, authorities, symbolic resources, and social encounters” (Slater 1997, p. 83). In this rather disorderly marketplace consumers try to build an orderly and “clean” habitus (Bourdieu 1986) with boundaries and borders establishing their place and the others’ with respect to it. Magical rituals directed at constructing subjective geo-social maps establish social actors as creative consumers, freeing them from the commotion of the disordered marketplace by letting them play with their boundaries. This effort can be described as magical as the social actors try to order the disordered, classify the unclassified, and familiarize the unfamiliar.

Consumers resort to magic when they are faced with inflexible social problems (Arnould, Price and Otnes 1999). Magic, as a practice of power, becomes a practical alternative for consumers when they are creating their social life worlds. These magical rituals establish suitable ways of living with respect to others. Horton (1993) describes magical praxis as the mixture of practical motives and emotional and aesthetic ones. These practical, emotional and aesthetic motives are used to create and recreate the social world around human beings. Arnould et al. (1999) maintain that magical practices thrive in the context of “freely floating signifiers” of the postmodern marketplace as they serve to transform the boundaries of a social actor’s now ‘structured’ world.

Such magical shaping is related to the sacred and profane, a dimension which structures social life (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). Similarly, Douglas (1991) distinguishes between purity and danger in the general social order. Dirt or matter out of place creates a disorder in the social life worlds and thus needs to be purified, ordered, or sacralized (Belk et al. 1989; Douglas 1991). The related distinctions between order and disorder, clean and dirty, and sacred and profane are important structural elements. Through the magical rituals related to the subjective meanings of clean and dirty, the consumer tries to maintain a particular ‘reality,’ which can be defined as his/her geo-social position on the elusive map of social relationships. Ritual behaviors, which are “symbolic expressions through which individuals articulate their social and meta-physical affiliations” (Rook 1984, p.280), communicate what one is and categorize what others are through locating where one stands and placing boundaries relative to others, destroying these boundaries, or shifting them. They are seen to be psychologically complex and intense behaviors aimed at resolving conflicts one faces during everyday social life (Rook, 1985). As Durkheim (1915) argues for sacred rituals, magical rituals and practices of clean and dirty are powerful processes that create particular sacred realities despite

profane threats of the commotion of the contemporary market place.

VOYAGING THROUGH THE BORDERS

Ritual has been likened to building dams and walls to “keep back the dangers of the unconscious” (Jung 1959, p.22). The unconscious in this view can be extended so as to circumscribe the unknown and the borders are created through rituals to help keep out the dangers of the unknown. Erikson (1982), on the other hand suggests that the fundamental purpose of rituals is to institutionalize or rationalize contradicting behavior. Therefore, taken together, it can be argued that rituals not only create boundaries but also through the processes of institutionalization or rationalization, transcend these boundaries by eliminating or shifting them. In this section we discuss how the magical rituals and practices of cleanliness might create ordered subjective realities within an otherwise unmanageable social world.

Upper and Lower Classes

We already discussed how the notions and practices of cleanliness and dirtiness played a significant role during the project of modernization and civilization and the formation of a middle class in the West. Today, a similar concern for cleanliness can be observed in developing societies that are in the process of establishing a middle class. It is interesting that usually the first international companies to go into developing markets such as China, Kazakhstan, and Turkey were those that sell cleaning products, like Unilever and P&G.

In *Lifebuoy Men and Lux Women* (1996), Burke examines the emerging needs for cleanliness during the making of modern Zimbabwe. He focuses on both the post-colonial impacts of global capitalism on the formation of needs for cleanliness and the magical uses of cleaning products—such as soap advertising that claims to make the consumers whiter. In Turkey, dirtiness is associated with poverty and backwardness, while cleanliness represents modern civilization and respectability (Ger 1999). Accordingly, a multinational detergent producer’s research indicates that Turkish consumers’ preferred degree of whiteness is whiter than in many other countries, indicating the extreme importance given to cleanliness. Moreover, rural migrants in Turkish cities are considered to be outside, unfamiliar, and dirty. Although most middle class homes are cleaned by rural migrant maids, the latter are established as being dirty by such practices like reserving for them a separate set of cutlery, glass, and towel, or not letting them cook for the household, thus setting up a boundary. These examples suggest that the practices of cleanliness have significance in societies that are in the process of modernization and establishing their middle classes. Consumers use cleaning and grooming products in order to magically transgress boundaries between lower and upper classes in developing societies, where to be clean symbolizes modernity, civilization, respectability, and a distance from poverty.

However, the use of cleaning products and services for distinction is not limited to developing countries. The upscale British lifestyle magazine *Wallpaper* maintains that it is now fashionable to be seen doing the housework and cleaning has attained a cult status with designer kits and products (Kirwan-Taylor 2003). In this case, it is not cleanliness per se that differentiates, but rather the fragrance of the detergent one uses—citrus mint yling ylang or jasmine lily or green tea patchouli—or how hip the cleaning kit one uses. Furthermore, in more affluent parts of the world, where the use of commodities like soap, detergents, and shampoo, services like hot water and plumbing, and appliances like washing machines and dishwashers are taken for granted, dirt becomes a playground for

consumers. The border this time endures between the upper and lower classes' nature of playing with dirt—the upper classes choose to quietly harmonize with it by skiing or climbing, whereas the lower classes enjoy noisily dominating it with truck races or motorbikes. On the other hand, in less affluent societies dirt remains to be a threat to civility that should be fought with as many cleaning products and utensils as possible (Belk and Ger forthcoming).

Inside and Outside

Practices and meanings of clean define and are defined by the border between the inside and the outside. This border specifies what one lets in and keeps out. Delaney (1991) finds that this distinction plays a very important role in a Turkish village. The villagers consider the city to be dirty and their village clean, in an abstract sense, as they maintain that their village is 'closed' to the 'polluting' influences from the city, which is open to contamination. Thus, they create an identity for their village and categorize the city as the outside as they establish a border between their clean village and the dirty city. This border becomes evident especially when the villagers mention that the road that links their village to the city is repulsive as it opens up the village (inside) to the impurities of the city (outside). In addition to these moral distinctions between clean and dirty, there is also a more physical boundary: inside versus outside of the home. Although villagers keep their houses very clean, and in the process consume a wide variety of cleaning products, they do not tend to the space outside the home: the dusty village roads and alleys are covered with mud, garbage, old machinery, and animal defecation. Similarly Chapman and Jamal (1997) find that there are different perceptions of inside and outside and of cleanliness and order between English and immigrant Pakistani households living in the same neighborhood. Pakistanis keep their homes clean but not their backyards. Their English neighbors, who see only the backyard but not the indoors, distance themselves from the Pakistanis whom they label as dirty.

In both Delaney's (1991) and Chapman and Jamal's (1997) findings, borders (between the city and the village or inside and outside the home) frame the meanings and experiences of clean and dirty. These meanings are not static; they vary depending on whether one refers to the inside or the outside, in whatever way these spaces are defined. For example, the city is not dirty per se relative to the village in a material sense; but by playing with the word's meaning, villagers are able to magically (the village does not become 'clean' all of a sudden) set an inside/outside border to identify themselves. These different conceptions regarding cleanliness, ordering, and borders show that the meanings given to clean and dirty provide keys to a particular construction of reality and coherence for social life.

Familiar and Unfamiliar

Another way in which social actors locate themselves and others on their geo-social map is by defining what is familiar and what is not. Through sacralizing rituals and practices of cleanliness one establishes, purges, or shifts boundaries to determine what is familiar or unfamiliar. For example, most people would consider a left over food in a restaurant dirty and would not eat it and summon the waiter to 'clean it up,' although they might take a bite from a friend's or a spouse's sandwich. This does not mean that the friend's sandwich is 'cleaner' than someone else's. However, this practice makes the sandwich magically clean while establishing the friend as familiar. In clothes shopping, many consumers do not hesitate to try the clothes on in the store and do not consider them to be dirty; however, they wash these same clothes before wearing them for the first time after purchase (Co?kuner 2002). This washing ritual,

Co?kuner argues, is a way of appropriating the new garment, making it one's own, and purifying it from alien particles and smell. Similarly, when we first move into a new home, we make it our own by cleaning it, as part of the possession ritual (McCracken 1999).

These rituals are not performed for the sake of cleanliness or hygiene. Instead, they take the person, the new garment, or the new house away from the domain of the unfamiliar and bring them over the border in to the familiar realm, where they are established as a friend, one's own outfit, or home sweet home. Perhaps a more striking example would concern how the bodily fluids of strangers are considered to be dirty and even disgusting, whereas that of the loved one's clean and sensual. The allure of or disgust with bodily fluids classify what is familiar and what is not in social relationships. What is important is not cleanliness per se, but rather how, through a magical ritual or practice, one transcends the meaning of cleanliness in order to locate the border between the familiar and unfamiliar.

Culture and Nature

Cleanliness has been an indication of the triumph of culture over nature, of civilization over the primitive in a modernist sense (Elias 1995; Vigarello 1985). However, today civilization is also identifiable with dirt—pollution. The boundary between nature and culture and its relationship with cleanliness becomes very apparent in an extreme example. Werner Herzog's documentary film *Ten Thousand Years Older* (2001) depicts the tragic disruption of the nomadic lives of the last unknown indigenous tribe on this planet. After the 1981 encounter between remote Brazilian tribespeople and a camera crew that took the natives from a Stone Age existence to modern times, within months, many in the tribe died of small pox and other diseases, as they did not have an immune system against the diseases of civility. After only a decade, their old way of life completely passed away and their children felt embarrassed by their "savage" parents. Although culture and civilization are associated with cleanliness, although the "civilized" children of the tribe regard their ancestors as dirty savage people, culture and civilization pollute both the culture and the bodies of the natives.

These paradoxes are encountered continuously in everyday social lives. Artists like Tracey Emin, who employs from used tampons and pregnancy test kits to soiled sheets and day-old underwear in her works, and Chris Ofili, known for using elephant dung, by playing with dirt in their artworks, try to draw attention to such paradoxes in the modern. They not only tear down the borders within the art world (high art versus low art), but also criticize the borders within the society between a 'civil' and a 'natural' way of living.

Let's consider some contradictions related to the culture/nature distinction. Some consumers voluntarily choose simple consumption practices so as to preserve a natural way of living and reduce the polluting hazards of civility to the nature by using fewer cleaning products and water, leaving the dishes and clothes 'dirty'. However, the numbers of these consumers are limited and pollution in urban societies is a major problem. Consequently, many urban consumers run from their civilized dirty cities to nature where it is clean and pure. However, the city can also be seen to be 'clean' with its asphalt roads and cemented pavements. One would consider mud or soil in the middle of the city 'dirty,' whereas one might love to lie on the ground in the woods, feeling the livelihood beneath, with the stars as a blanket and sleeping out in the open 'clean' air. Soil per se is not dirty, but it is in the city where it is not nature (-al). After having spent a few days in the pure clean nature, maybe even taking a mud bath, one then returns to the 'dirty' city and runs to the shower, to the favorite shampoo, bath salt, conditioner, and

soap, which were denied during camping. All these instances show that the culture and nature distinction is laden with several paradoxes. Not only the boundary between culture and nature is set and played with through clean and dirty practices and rituals, but also the meanings of clean and dirty change according to the boundary between culture and nature.

“HOME” IS WHERE WE ARE SAFE AND AWAY FROM DANGER

Perhaps the boundary between what is safe versus threatening is the fundamental melting pot of all the discussed distinctions. The above examples involve ways of creating a safe ‘home’ in the face of the threats generated by the commotion of the disorderly world. Let’s consider another example. Children are commonly considered to be clean, innocent, and pure, not contaminated by the dirtiness of the world, even if they have runny noses and smelly diapers. However, homeless children living in the streets are usually considered to be dirty. It is not uncommon in Istanbul to come across a homeless child who has no place to wash. Most people regard these children not only as dirty (dirty per se as well as contaminating their city), but also as threatening. However, as long as these children are contained in the slums of the city where they “belong”, there is no urgent threat for the ‘society.’ Here we also see a convergence of several boundaries—between the slum and the city, in place and out of place, and the boundaries within the society. The various boundaries we discussed relate to the threats we encounter in our daily lives and efforts of sometimes keeping them away by building up walls or sometimes establishing them as safe by transcending those walls.

Social life is becoming more and more commodified through mass production and mass marketing and with the massive overproduction of commodity signs. Social relations are dissolving into relations between commodities and consumption practices (Holt 1997; Taussig 1980). The new reflexive modernization, Beck (1992) argues, creates market dependency in all dimensions of living by the mass consumption of not only commodities, but also opinions, habits, attitudes, and lifestyles. Technological advancements, mass communication technologies, and flows of globalization accentuate this process. The meanings that are ascribed to commodities proliferate and change so rapidly in today’s marketplace that it may not be possible for consumers to control what their social actions communicate. This ever-expanding colonization of social domains by such marketplace symbolism ‘deterritorializes’ the social actor in his/her own territory (Deleuze and Guattari 1983) and delivers them over to an external control and standardization (Beck 1992). The lack of control over one’s own social world creates what Beck (1992) calls the risk society where there exist incalculable, unaccountable, uncompensatable, and unlimited threats for the individual. Therefore, the individual feels anxious, insecure, deterritorialized or out of place—and note that for Douglas (1991) dirt is matter out of place—and alienated or a loss of control over his/her social relationships. In an attempt to re-territorialize and reclaim control over their social life worlds, actors utilize magical rituals and practices. These magical rituals and practices institute a response, a creative moment against the threats of the marketplace as they determine the self, the other, and their respective places in the geo-social map that is (re)ordered through the continuous construction, elimination, and modification of boundaries between what poses a threat and what makes one feel safe. Consumption rituals and practices help consumers create a world of their own, one which is familiar and safe, out of the threatening disorderly material world. Taussig (1980) suggests that such moments of creative resistance create particular social realities through fantasy. These

fantasies of cleanliness are a way of bringing back the social relations that were taken away by commodity fetishism, a way of re-territorialization of the human social life in order to feel at home, in order to feel safe.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

In contemporary societies, where consumers have lost control of their social domains over to marketplace symbolism, they respond by consumer symbolism—they play with the boundaries in their geo-social maps. Magical rituals and practices of cleanliness serve to communicate and categorize themselves and others in order to feel safe and at home. Research about such practices will help us understand how consumers cope with the commotion of consumer society and the paradoxes of this order-creating process.

One fruitful research area would be the relationship between consumers and their brands of cleaning and grooming products. For example, when do people feel the need to clean their body or homes; when do they feel the need to put on make up, or fragrances, and wear clean clothes? It might be that this need arises especially when one invites someone into his or her various boundaries. Most people clean their houses when they invite people over and shower before a date and cleaning and grooming rituals are very important in trying to make a good first impression. Another question is what aspects of different brands and products make consumers feel safe in various threatening breaches of boundaries in social relationships? These questions imply that the brand relationships may be based on anxiety and a feeling of safety rather than love and a historical bond. There are also implications for brand loyalty as this kind of relationship may be connected to fashion and can be manipulated through marketing efforts that play with the notions of safety.

Another research topic relates to a macro issue: the use of cleaning and grooming products leads to global warming, contamination, ozone depletion, and pollution. Thus, while consumers try to construct a safe and orderly haven by cleaning or playing with dirt, they simultaneously create new risks and threats at a macro level, they contribute to the disorder and the risk society (Beck 1992). This paradox is worth studying in order to see how ecological issues fit with the practices and rituals of cleanliness and to explore how meanings of cleanliness and dirt change in personal and environmental domains.

Finally, the festive nature of cleanliness seems to be a worthwhile topic of study. Bakhtin (1965) sees the marketplace to be a space for human festivity betrayed and distorted by the religious, political, and moral hierarchies. What if that marketplace, having become the domain of hegemonic capitalism, is now itself betraying human festivity? If the human festivity is to be turned over to everyday social life worlds of consumers, can magical rituals and practices of cleanliness play a role in this overturn? In other words, is cleaning a festive moment? In the article ‘Cleaning Idols,’ the upscale magazine *Wallpaper* claims that the ritual of cleaning has a deeply calming effect and its end result—order—is surprisingly rejuvenating. Rejuvenation is also what Bakhtin’s carnival brought to social life. How about playing with dirt? Is taking a mud bath or camping out in the nature rejuvenating? If both cleaning your car or taking a shower and taking a mud bath are festive, what do these activities have in common? That is, how do consumers use these playful moments—festivity of carnival, art, chasing of dirt, and mud games—to negotiate the safety of their spaces?

We conceptually explored various issues about the role of consumer rituals and practices of cleanliness in social relations. Research on such issues would provide an interrogation of post-structuralist conceptualizations of social orders and an understand-

ing of the negotiation processes of consumers who are cleaning and re-cleaning and trying to create their own social orders on a daily and even a momentarily basis.

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The Memetics of Transcendent Places

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines transcendent retail places and uses the emergent theory of memetics to situate transcendence in the retail landscape. First, memetics will be discussed. Next transcendence will be defined. Then, the paper describes three retail food establishments and their transcendent elements, demonstrating why transcendence raises them above the sum of their parts to memetic stature.

THE THEORY OF MEMETICS

Lynch (1996) characterized memetics as the new paradigm of "how ideas acquire people," contrasted with more traditional notions of "how people acquire ideas" (p. 18). Williams (1999) refers to memetics as "the contagious transfer of intellectual and/or cultural information" (p. 113). Memes, like viruses, exist for their own purposes, and their aim is to get copied and spread. This is the biological metaphor Dawkins (1976) originally promulgated from sociobiology when he established the nascent field of memetics. For purposes of the current study, memetics will be considered as a theory of ideas, their dissemination, and demise (Blackmore 1999).

The theory of memetics takes its subject matter to be "memes." A meme, most broadly, is a complex idea. Gelb (1997) defined a meme as "any communication that produces its own repetition, possibly in a new form (p. 57). Discussing memes in the world of commerce, Williams (1999) included slogans, catch phrases, melodies, icons, inventions, and fashions as memes. In the current study, memetic analysis will be used to illuminate the transcendent nature of retail establishments whose "mystique" cannot be accounted for in the traditional sense. Atmospheric, relationship marketing and retail image are established constructs used to understand the interaction between retailer and patron. However, the current study posits that these constructs do not fully explain the phenomenon of transcendent places. Thus we turn to a memetic analysis.

Lynch (1996) set out a number of modes of memetic transmission. Several of these are important in the context of the current study. The first, and perhaps the most familiar in the context of marketing, is proselytizing. This is the widespread transmission of persuasive messages designed to "convert" the audience to a particular stance (meme) (Gelb 1997). Lynch (1996) proposed that proselytizing was the fastest way to spread memes.

A second powerful mode of transmission of memes is through cognitive advantage. Lynch (1996) noted that ideas that seem to be coherent and well founded are adopted by others and retained by their adherents. The fact that people find the idea cogent leads to its cognitive advantage. This is basically the idea of face validity, which is well established in social science.

One reason that some memes spread widely is that they are easy for people to imitate. Blackmore (1999) notes that "Wrong theories in science may spread simply because they are comprehensible and fit easily with existing theories ..." (p. 59). Related to this idea is that of learnability (Williams 2000). That is, ideas spread that are easy for the host to learn and remember which in turn depends on how simple they are and how genetically and culturally programmed we are to learn them (Williams 2000).

Another factor is how compelling the meme is (Walker 2000). Compelling memes get their hosts to talk about them (Lynch 1996; Blackmore 1999). To some extent, this can be a function of the structure of the meme. For example, chain letters contain within their structure powerful injunctions against breaking the chain of replication. Furthermore, marketers will not be surprised to learn that ideas that grab people's attention are considered more compelling (Blackmore 1999). Gelb (1997) notes that one way to make your meme more interesting is to use words in novel ways.

Finally, there are characteristics of hosts that make them better replicator prospects, and Blackmore (1999) calls these advantageous hosts "meme-fountains" (p. 163). These include people who are powerful, or look powerful, who are perceived as experts, or are in positions of authority.

APPLICATIONS OF MEMETICS IN BUSINESS/ MARKETING

There have been a number of applications of memetics in marketing. Gelb (1997) and Williams (1999) note a number of advertising campaigns that gained widespread acceptance and subsequently became part of consumer culture to a degree unintended by the original advertisers and, indeed, unrelated in some cases to the intentions of those advertisers. An example both note is, "Where's the beef." This line was originally a Wendy's tag line, but later was co-opted into politics, and finally has become a general-purpose expression meaning, roughly "where's the substance here?"

Similarly, viral marketing, defined as "when the product (or users using the product) sells itself" has been examined from a memetic perspective (Walker 2000, p. 103). Walker (2000) notes that a number of companies, especially e-marketers, are using memes/viral marketing to "sell products, create a buzz among target audiences, build databases and increase brand recognition" (p. 103). One such example is an online greeting card company that lets you know how to get to their site and send a card yourself.

Of interest in the current study are "transcendent places" which, like "Where's the beef?" have somehow risen above the merely commercial to achieve legendary status. The traditional tools of analysis such as retail image, do not fully explain this status. Furthermore, these places are examples of the meta-meme of "transcendence" which can be applied in a variety of contexts.

TRANSCENDENCE

Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1989) approached the idea of transcendence when they described the sacred and the profane in consumer behavior. As they noted, certain products can acquire special significance to a consumer and thereby become sacred. Similarly, in the context of the current study, transcendence is the ability that some places have to acquire special significance above their mere functional nature.

In their discussion of how transcendent experience can be triggered by a forest environment, Williams and Harvey (2001) identified five key characteristics of the transcendent experience. These are strong positive affect, feelings of overcoming the limits of everyday life, sense of union with the universe or some other power or entity, absorption in and significance of the moment, and a sense of timelessness (Williams and Harvey 2001). We will examine transcendence in the context of a commercial environ-

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ment, positing that over time, some retail places transcend their down-to-earth elements and become memes in their own right.

THREE TRANSCENDENT PLACES

This research considers three retail establishments, all of which encompass a food service component. “Young’s Dairy” was founded as a farm in the 1800s. Young’s Dairy has been in the same family ever since, however, it has undergone a significant transformation over the years. Currently, it features a restaurant, ice cream store, and recreational facility.

The “Counter Culture Bakery”² was founded in the mid-1980s in a college town as a high-quality deli and bakery. It eventually took on aspects of a coffee shop, restaurant, and small specialty grocer, and continues in these functions currently.

The Billy Goat Tavern is a Chicago legend. Although there are now multiple locations of the Billy Goat, we will concentrate on the most famous of these which is located on the subterranean Lower Michigan Avenue. It is in the heart of the Chicago business district, minutes away from the upscale shops and hotels of the Magnificent Mile, yet it is an out of the way place underground that you would never find were you not looking for it.

METHODOLOGIES

A multi-method approach has been utilized in studying the manifestations of transcendence in these three food-related establishments. The study of Young’s Dairy utilized analysis of customer comments that capture the consumer’s experience in their own words. One of the promotional tools used by Young’s Dairy is a birthday club. Patrons who register for the birthday club are mailed a post card near the date of their birthday each year. The birthday postcards are redeemable at Young’s Dairy for free ice cream. Several thousand patrons ultimately registered as members of the birthday club, and this data base has been sampled periodically to gather marketing information for Young’s Dairy. The authors were given access to one of these surveys in which responses from 303 patrons were obtained. One of the authors has also visited Young’s Dairy on multiple occasions as a participant-observer and has had the opportunity to meet with the CEO. From these data sources a picture of Young’s Dairy has emerged.

Information on the Counter Culture Bakery was gathered over a period of two months through in-store observation and two depth interviews. One of the authors conducted eight hours of observation in the business, and conducted over two hours of depth interviews with one owner and one employee of the business. Indications of the transcendent nature of the business were subsequently culled from the resulting field notes.

To gain insights into the nature of the Billy Goat Tavern, an analysis was made of patron comments published on the World Wide Web. Many travel and entertainment oriented web sites allow for patrons to submit reviews which include space for open ended comments. An analysis was made of these consumer comments posted on three of these sites, Fodor’s (fodors.com), City Search (citysearch.com) and Centerstage (centerstage.net). These three sites yielded a total of 118 patron reviews. Insights to the Billy Goat were also obtained through published material and on a site visit by one of the authors.

Young’s Dairy Yellow Springs, Ohio

Old-Fashioned Atmosphere among the Hippies. Young’s Dairy is located in a rural area on a major road less than ten minutes away from two colleges: a liberal arts school well known for its progressive perspective and a conservative Christian college with a focus

on ministry and mission work. Also within ten minutes are a state park, two nature preserves and a bike trail that is part of a major network of trails spreading through the region. A forty-five minute driving radius includes at least six other colleges and universities, a major military base, and a population base of nearly one million people.

Although Young’s Dairy is best known for its ice cream shop, the complex also includes a separate family restaurant, and a family recreation center which features a miniature golf course, a driving range, and batting cages, as well as a seasonal corn field maze. In addition to cows, the farm is also home to numerous goats that patrons are encouraged to feed.

Young’s Dairy does have very good ice cream. This is attested to by the vast majority of the survey respondents. The success that Young’s Dairy has had over many decades is not likely to have occurred without a quality product. However, attempts to sell Young’s Dairy ice cream through grocery store channels have not proven successful. There may be many reasons for the lack of success in this channel. However, the survey results suggest a critical factor. The fact is that the experiential aspects of eating the ice cream at Young’s Dairy cannot be packaged.

In response to the open-ended question, “Why do you come to Young’s Dairy?” survey respondents are nearly as likely to mention the atmosphere as they are to mention products or services. Common responses include; “homey atmosphere,” “family atmosphere,” “old-fashioned atmosphere,” “country atmosphere,” and similar statements. It is interesting to note that two or more very divergent populations intersect at Young’s Dairy. Parents and grandparents taking children on a family farm outing intersect with students and faculty from a progressive liberal arts college. This juxtaposition was captured by a respondent whose reason for coming to Young’s Dairy was “old-fashioned atmosphere among ‘the hippies.’”

Collages made from photos sent in by patrons adorn the walls of Young’s Dairy. These photos show patrons wearing Young’s Dairy t-shirts in front of landmarks throughout the U.S. and around the world. Many of the backdrops feature traditional tourist sites such as Mount Rushmore, The Eiffel Tower, The Great Wall of China, The Sydney Opera House and traditional tourist destinations such as Las Vegas, and Florence Italy. Less typical locales such as Changoene Mozambique, Nishinasuno Japan, Gambia West Africa, Arrowtown New Zealand, Al Kharg Saudi Arabia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nazca Peru, Addis Ababa Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Antarctica are also featured among the scores of photos posted. T-shirts emblazoned with brand logos are not unique. They are sold by countless businesses. However, a business whose patrons feel motivated to pack a logo t-shirt on a trip so that they may be photographed wearing it, and send the photo back to the business is rare indeed.

The Emergent Meme: Ice Cream Tastes Better if You Can See a Cow. It is apparent from the responses to the question, “Why do you come to Young’s Dairy?” that it has transcended the mundane to become more than an ice cream shop and family restaurant. Responses include: “Yellow Springs trademark,” “it has a lot of tradition,” “special place we take out of town visitors” “we fed our children at Young’s Dairy now we feed our grandchildren,” “I like telling my friends and guests about it,” “we have introduced Young’s Dairy to at least one family a month every year since we moved here seven years ago.” These and many similar comments suggest that Young’s Dairy is more than the sum of its parts. It is more than good ice cream, reasonably priced food and family entertainment. In fact, many patrons who expressed a deep affection for Young’s Dairy also expressed some level of dissatisfaction with one or more aspects of Young’s Dairy products or services. Indeed, once established, the meme is strengthened by supporting

²The name has been changed to protect proprietary information.

evidence while disconfirming evidence is discounted. Thus the transcendent nature of Young's Dairy buys it some latitude for imperfection.

The nature of the environment of Young's Dairy lends itself to transcendence. Where better to buy home made ice cream than on a dairy farm? As the CEO stated, "ice cream tastes better if you can see a cow." This leads to a cognitive advantage for Young's Dairy. There is face validity that ice cream produced on a dairy farm is home made in the truest sense of the term and therefore it must be good. It is easy for patrons to assume unique qualities for the product given the unique location. Another aspect of face validity is the popularity of Young's Dairy. It can get very crowded, particularly on summer weekends. Success breeds success—can all of these people be wrong? These aspects help build the Young's Dairy meme.

The location, an easy drive or short bike ride from several colleges, also helps in the perpetuation of the meme. Students at nearby colleges are frequent patrons at Young's Dairy. It is likely that new students are initiated into the meme of Young's Dairy directly or indirectly by more senior students. By such a mechanism it becomes a college tradition and a likely destination for alumni visits.

Selling t-shirts with "Young's Dairy" emblazoned on them, and by example, encouraging patrons to wear them around the world is only part of the marketing effort at Young's Dairy but a part that fits well with the meme of the transcendent place. This is a clever method of proselytizing the meme. The presence of the photos helps to reinforce the transcendence meme by suggesting that Young's Dairy is world famous. It also stands as a silent challenge to patrons to replicate the meme by buying a Young's Dairy t-shirt and having their photo taken wearing it with interesting or unlikely locations as a backdrop as they travel. Since college students, college faculty, missionaries (from the nearby Christian college) and military personnel are particularly well traveled groups, this challenge is readily accepted.

The meme is also proselytized through annual events such as a bike ride, an art exhibit and auction, and a children's Easter Egg Hunt. Young's Dairy is arguably more centrally anchored into the community than any other business in the area, and that just adds to its transcendent nature.

The Counter Culture Bakery

In Search of the Mystique. One of the very first notions the owners put forth when introducing the researcher to the Counter Culture is the idea that the shop has a "mystique" about it. The owners have met people across the U.S. who have visited the Counter Culture and thought well of it. Even through recessions that hurt the local economy, and despite their high prices, the Counter Culture has continued to do well and maintain a very loyal clientele. The owners call it a "mystique" because they cannot define it, and believe that it stems from more than just the "terrific" food and the "eclectic and interesting" staff. It is, indeed, some transcendent quality.

Quality is the watchword when it comes to Counter Culture products. The owners and managers are constantly assessing the quality of the products they sell compared with those of local competitors. They even note that not all of their products yield the return they want financially, but they result in goodwill among the customers and help support the high-quality positioning of the store. It's also worthwhile noting that substitute products, often of very high quality themselves, are widely available in the area, yet Counter Culture customers remain fanatically loyal to this place.

The atmosphere in the Counter Culture has been described as cozy, eclectic, and engaging. Art features prominently, including

original artwork by the employees and "bread art" (shaped and preserved bread pieces). In general, even the more functional displays tend to be decorative, and wherever possible aesthetics are not sacrificed for functionality. The owners feel it is very important to tend to both the business side and the aesthetic side of things.

The Counter Culture's owner built the shop with a vision of a "laid-back, ex-hippie" pro-social, environmentally-friendly sort of place. This founding vision seems to have permeated the place and remained throughout decades of change in the "outside world."

The Counter Culture is noted for being a part of and building a sense of community. In this college town, the store provides space and tacks for people to post notices of community happenings, many of which are political or alternative in nature. The business is a sponsor of local public radio, and provides baked goods that are responsive to local needs, such as Challah on Fridays and special items for a variety of holidays. The owners are very particular about which professional organizations they join, and make those decisions based on the politics of the association rather than on pure marketing concerns.

The customers in the Counter Culture also seem to feel a sense of community. They sit together when it's busy, and ask each other for copies of the local bus schedule or newspaper. The store policies tend toward personalized treatment of customers which may encourage this sense of community. Employees call people by name to pick up their orders (rather than assigning numbers), and customers can call ahead and have fast-selling items held for them. Employees will even trust regular customers to pay them another day if they forget their money. Being aware of the effect of high prices on some customers, employees will suggest good deals to customers with limited funds, and treat them as just as important as more lucrative customers. While the owners have noticed that it bothers some customers to have to wait in line during busy times, they are committed to taking the time to treat each customer as an individual. As one owner said, "each customer is a friend." They let people in a hurry cut in line and just leave money on the counter, and they will even save the change for the person and give it to them later if they don't have the exact change.

The owners very much see their clientele as friends, or even part of the family. One of the owners said that owning the Counter Culture is "like throwing a party in your house for 200 people every day."

There is a sense of ownership among both customers and employees of the Counter Culture. The owners encourage this in the employees through the use of policies such as giving them a "music allowance" to buy some music of their own choosing to play in the shop. Employees are also prone to writing graffiti on the signs that abound behind the scenes, and this graffiti often becomes an irreverent dialogue between "management" and "labor." Employees are generally intelligent, well-educated, and independent. Many are or were local college students, most are women, and both management and employees promote an atmosphere that is not oppressive to women.

During slow times, patrons may "camp out" for longer stretches, reading or studying or chatting. "Regulars" form a community. Customers will greet one another and often know about each others' lives outside the store. Customers will also talk and joke with the help, and the conversations indicate that the workers and customers know quite a bit about each others' lives.

If customers are annoyed, they're likely to speak up right then and there. One famous line was "are you having a tea party or making my sandwich?" It is apparent that customers do not just relegate responsibility for monitoring employees' behavior to the management, but rather take it upon themselves in a more communitarian spirit.

Reinforcing the Meme. Art and music are important parts of the Counter Culture's connection to the community. In addition to local artwork, the Counter Culture is known as an annual sponsor of the local summer jazz festival. Thus patrons of the "arts experience" are likely to spread the word. Indeed, music companies with names similar to the Counter Culture have been mistakenly assumed to be associated with the Counter Culture deli.

As with Young's Dairy, the Counter Culture offers face validity that it is truly something special. The aesthetics of the décor as well as of the products are unique. The high level of social interaction between actors in the shop, whether customers or employees, is testimony to the "real" (as opposed to merely commercial) nature of the relationships therein.

The Counter Culture is a compelling meme as well. Knowing the "best place in town" for coffee, baked goods, lunch, etc. conveys a type of social status. Being able to introduce others there and demonstrate that the employees know you by name is even more status. It's "cool" to be "in the know" about "cool" things.

The meme fountains that surround and spout the Counter Culture meme are generally local, but powerful. These include regulars—so called "members of the family"—as well as continuing cohorts of college students who operate in the same fashion mentioned earlier for Young's Dairy. Community activists, who see the Counter Culture as a locus of information and support, also tend to be opinion leaders within certain market segments. Finally, people who want to be "in the know" about the cool places to hang out in town spread the meme far and wide both verbally and on the Internet.

Billy Goat Tavern—Chicago, Illinois

Cheesborgor, cheeps, and a Pepsi. The Billy Goat Tavern is a bar and grill with a limited menu centered on cheeseburgers. It has reasonable prices, given its location. The Billy Goat was the 2002 Audience Winner in the category of "best burger" on the Citysearch web site. However, a review of patron comments on the site suggests that many people who consider themselves fans of the Billy Goat find the food unremarkable at best. One patron review states: "I have been going to the Billy Goat since the 60s and it has never been about the food. This is all about Chicago, tradition, and just good fun." Another states, "It's not the burgers it's the ambience, that's the only reason I love this place. The burgers are just OK, but the atmosphere, knowing that Mike Royko would go on his famous rants here is just awesome." A third writes, "If you come here expecting a great cheeseburger don't bother. But if you are into Chicago journalism, come here, grab a beer and a cheeseburger and shoot the breeze with the cooks and the other newspaper guys that still come here... You NEED to come here if you used to follow Royko's... columns." All three of these patrons gave the Billy Goat a perfect score of ten on the rating scale. Many patrons expressed similar feelings.

While some patrons did give the cheeseburgers high ratings, it appears that atmosphere, rather than food, builds fans of the Billy Goat. The atmosphere of the Billy Goat might be described as endearingly bad. Little, if any, redecorating appears to have occurred since 1964 when the Billy Goat moved to its present location, (the original location was demolished to build the United Center). The basic furnishings are well worn and somewhat dingy. The perpetual darkness of the Lower Michigan location amplifies this dinginess. The atmosphere has been described by patrons as follows: "this is in every sense a dive," "I can't say the place is the cleanest...this is a hole in the wall," "original grease from the 40s still on the walls!" "the place is smoky, the staff is loud—what more could you ax (sic) for?" These comments all come from patrons who gave the Billy Goat high marks on the rating scale. It appears

that it is the utter lack of the accoutrements of other restaurants that creates the unique character of the Billy Goat. With better food and a pleasant décor the Billy Goat would likely lose its authenticity and its charm.

The publicity genius of William Sianis built the Billy Goat into a legend frequented by eminent Chicago writers and by professional athletes and team owners. Columns featuring the Billy Goat, and photos of celebrity patrons, adorn the Billy Goat's Wall of Fame. This memorabilia reinforces the world famous status of the Billy Goat thus replicating the meme. Why would so many people write about the Billy Goat, if it was not special? To paraphrase Boorstin, the Billy Goat is well known for being famous.³

The Importance of a Meme Fountain. Many fans of the Billy Goat find the food mediocre. The atmosphere is dingy and not attractive in the traditional sense. Yet the Billy Goat has attained legendary status. One reason that this has occurred is that the Billy Goat has benefited from three "meme-fountains" namely Mike Royko, John Belushi and the founder William "Billy Goat" Sianis.

Meme fountains are opinion leaders. Memes held by these individuals are more likely to be replicated. In the case of Mike Royko he was a highly regarded newspaper columnist with a large and loyal following. He regularly wrote about the Billy Goat and the cast of characters that populated it. Royko's writings added to the status of the Billy Goat as did Saturday Night Live. During the 1970s a recurring skit featured an unnamed diner where all patrons were given a "cheesborgor, cheeps, and a Pepsi" regardless of their order. The original skit was written by Don Novello of the Saturday Night Live cast. Since Novello, John Belushi, Bill Murray, and Dan Aykroyd all had a Chicago connection, it was soon recognized that the restaurant featured in the skit was the Billy Goat. The "cheesborgor" guys were very popular during what many believe to be the heyday of Saturday Night Live. Many patron comments still make reference to these skits that were performed a generation ago.

While Belushi and Royko enhanced the mystique of the Billy Goat this mystique was created by the founder, William "Billy Goat" Sianis. Sianis was a larger than life character with a flair for the dramatic. The drama began with the naming of the Billy Goat. The original Lincoln Tavern was renamed the Billy Goat after a goat wandered in one day. Sianis adopted the goat, changed the name of the tavern, and adopted the nickname Billy Goat for himself. Sianis was the quintessential promoter. In 1944, when the Republican Convention was in Chicago, he posted a sign saying, "No Republicans Allowed." The resulting notoriety drew both gloating Democrats and Republicans demanding to be served. In 1945, Sianis bought two tickets to the World Series, one for him and one for his goat. When the goat was denied entry, Sianis publicly placed a curse on the Chicago Cubs (Sutcliff and Venci 2001). The legend of "the curse" grew over the years as the Cubs had one disappointing season after another. He finally removed the curse in 1969. Sianis died in 1970. His nephew inherited the Billy Goat, and following in the founders footsteps, tried to take a goat into Wrigley Field in 1973. When the goat was denied admission the curse was reinstated (Sutcliff and Venci 2001).

DISCUSSION

Humans have always revered certain places. Sacred places predate recorded history and adherents to many contemporary religions treat certain places with particular reverence. The current study posits that there is a parallel to this phenomenon in the secular world. We are all familiar with special commercial places. These

³"A celebrity is a person who is known for his well-knownness" (Boorstin, Daniel)

are the “must sees” on a visit to any given city or region. Typically these “must sees” are bars, restaurants, diners, bookstores, or coffeehouses, but this list may include sporting goods stores, grocers, bakeries, gardening stores or virtually any other type of business. These commercial places have the ability to create transcendent experiences. The businesses examined in the current study create these transcendent experiences in many ways.

Strong Positive Affect

Many of the participants in the study specifically use the term “love” in describing some aspect of the relationship with the respective transcendent place. Indeed the 303 respondents in the Young’s Dairy survey used the word “love” forty-seven times. In addition, the family metaphor is widely used with regard to the Counter Culture, with the attendant feelings of warmth, acceptance, and caring. Clearly, these transcendent places engender strong positive affect.

Overcoming Limits of Everyday Life

For many of the respondents a visit to one of these transcendent places is a pilgrimage of sorts. The Billy Goat is a very common tourist destination. Out-of-towners visit to get a taste of “real Chicago.” Similarly, for many visitors to Young’s Dairy a visit constitutes a trip to the country, a way to get in touch with a pastoral vision of America. Customers of the Counter Culture see the shop and its products as an escape into a fantasy world of rich, decadent, expensive fantasy food and drink.

Sense of Union

Patrons of Young’s Dairy often note the “family atmosphere.” This is a place where people take children and grandchildren to experience a family farm and to associate with similar families. These patrons are buying a set of values to accompany their ice cream. Similarly, regulars of the Counter Culture are “family” and there’s a strong sense of community among the patrons and employees.

The Billy Goat has been described as a “blue-collar bar.” People who proudly adopt the blue-collar role seek this environment. As one patron who rated the Billy Goat as a ten stated, “Please don’t go here if you were ever in a fraternity or if you are upwardly mobile... Go to Applebee’s and leave this place for the people who really enjoy it.” People who do not have blue-collar jobs, but who adopt a blue-collar persona, like Mike Royko, also find a home at the Billy Goat.

Absorption in the Moment

Young’s Dairy reflects a simpler time thus a visit to Young’s Dairy may create an idealized family moment that can be a respite from modern family reality. Similarly, for the first time visitor a trip to the Billy Goat can be other worldly. Its location on an underground street at the base of a grimy staircase can be intimidating to some. Several patron reviews specifically exhorted the hesitant to not be afraid to venture down for a visit. For first timers and regulars alike, the very process of getting to the Billy Goat provides a transition into the moment. At the Counter Culture, the compelling sights and sounds, the aroma and the sense of belonging take patrons outside their everyday lives, at least for a few moments.

Sense of Timelessness

One patron proclaimed that the Billy Goat was “Chicago frozen in time”. After moving to its current location, the Billy Goat has been essentially unchanged for nearly forty years. One Young’s Dairy patron noted that Young’s Dairy “reminds us of like estab-

lishments that existed where we grew up in the late 40s.” While Young’s Dairy has undergone substantial changes over its lifetime, its essence remains the same. The Counter Culture is the essence of “ex-hippie” 1960s by design, and remains true to those values despite the fact that it was indeed established in the 1980s and despite the shifts in the social world around it over the course of almost 20 years.

Memes and Meta-memes of Transcendent Places

What emerged from this study are two powerful memetic notions. One is the ability of these three food establishments to transcend everyday retail branding and become memes. The second is the introduction of the meta-meme of the transcendent retail place. There are three important aspects to this process: a transcendent experience is triggered in the place as described above; over time the meme gets replicated as it passes from person to person; once established the meme is resistant to disconfirming evidence. The memes of Young’s Dairy, the Counter Culture, and the Billy Goat are evocative, powerful ideas in a memetic sense that their owners could have only dreamed of originally.

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Provocation and Humor in Ad Effects: Constrained Multi-Group Analysis and Beyond

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Conceptualization

It is not easy to stir consumers' emotions with a routine advertisement because a multitude of advertisements surround them (Armstrong 1995). Advertisers have found a new, albeit controversial way to get their message across. They have begun using shock ads to attempt to capture consumers' attention from within a media clutter.

Provocative Advertising

Vezina and Paul (1997) suggested the three main characteristics of provocation: distinctiveness, ambiguity and transgression of norms and taboos. Distinctive advertisements have been shown to get greater attention than nondistinctive advertisement (Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard 1986; Rossiter and Percy 1987). If ambiguous ads contain factors which irritate or challenge social norms and standards, they can be called as provocative ads.

Provocative and Humorous Advertising

Humorous provocative advertising can be regarded as the mixture of the humor and the provocative appeal. Though the results of humor appeals in ads remains uncertain, it seems clear that humorous ads have a positive impact on increasing attentions and the liking of the source.

Emotional Response

The Thayer Arousal Model (Thayer 1986; Thayer and Carey 1974) suggests that arousal is a complex phenomenon that comes from the interaction of two dimensions: energy and tension. If the feeling of tension is not excessive, it activates to generate energy, which causes to positive cognitions (La Tour and Pitts 1989). Humor can be used to weaken feelings of tension.

Measures of Emotion: The Self-Assessment Manikin

The self-assessment manikin (Lang 1980) is better than the verbal check list for measuring a respondent's emotional responses, because the visual method (see Figure 1) eliminates cognitive processing (Lang 1985; Morris and Waine 1993). The validity of SAM and AdSAM (Morris, Woo, Geason, and Kim 2002) a variation of SAM, has been established in a number of studies (Lang 1980; Morris, Bradley, Lang, and Waine 1992; Morris and Waine 1993; Morris, Woo, Geason, and Kim 2002; Morris, Woo, and Cho 2003).

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Provocative ads and humorous provocative ads will generate higher emotional responses on the arousal and dominance dimensions than general ads as measured by the Self-Assessment Manikin (AdSAM) and PAD.

Hypothesis 2: Humorous provocative ads will generate significantly higher levels of pleasure than provocative ads as measured by the Self-Assessment Manikin (AdSAM).

Hypothesis 3: Pleasure levels rather than arousal and dominance in emotional responses to ads as measured by the Self-Assessment Manikin and PAD will have a stronger relationship to the attitude toward advertising, the brand attitude, and the purchase intention.

Methodology

Pretest and Stimuli Selection

Nine print advertisements were created or selected from existing campaigns for pre-testing. There were three potential provocative, three potential humorous provocative, and three potential traditional 'general' ads. Since nine print advertisements were selected as stimuli based on the authors' subjective judgment, they were pre-tested to make sure that they fit the present study. One more advertisement was created as a control.

Respondents

One hundred four students at the university participated in the study. A convenience sample of 55 subjects was recruited from the advertising elements class and 49 responses were randomly collected on campus. The subjects consisted of 56 female students and 48 male students with a mean age of 22.

Procedure

The seven advertisements were randomly ordered in seven different ad sequences. The seven order levels make a block factor and a common group period effect/ no residual effect was assumed since the cross-over design satisfied the strong condition for balance. After viewing each ad, subjects were asked to fill out each seven questionnaires, examining their emotional response, attitude toward the ad and their brand attitude and purchase intention.

Dependent Variables

The AdSAM (Morris, Woo, Geason, and Kim 2002) was used to measure subjects' emotional responses. The Aad and Ab scale contained four-bipolar scale items with .99 and .98 Cronbach's alpha, respectively (Holbrook and Batra 1987). Purchase intention was measured based on the summed score of a three-item scale (Cronbach's alpha=.88) used by Bearden, Lichtenstein, and Teel (1984).

Results

Ad execution had a significant effect on pleasure ($F=71.393, p<.05$), arousal ($F=83.936, p<.00$), and dominance ($F=71.393, p<.00$) and following multiple comparison test using Tukey's HSD showed that the humorous provocative advertisement has a greater influence than the simple provocative and general ad. For the attitude measurement, ad execution had significant effects on Aad ($F=52.728, p<.05$), Ab ($F=20.406, p<.05$), and PI ($F=5.051, p<.05$), and consequent post-hoc tests using Tukey's HSD concurrently indicated that humorous provocative advertisement had more effect than simple provocative ad on attitude and intention.

Multi-group LISREL (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1997) structural equation modeling reproduced Pearson's correlation coefficient confirmed the overall linear relationship between the three dimensions of emotional response and attitude dimensions of Aad, Ab, and PI (SRMR=.05 (.04) and CFI=.96 (.98) for provocative (humorous provocative) response grouping. According to the likelihood ratio test (LRT), humorous provocative responses had significantly stronger linear loading patterns than provocative ads.

Conclusion and Discussions

The provocative ad and humorous provocative ad, both of which had provocative factors, were expected to have a strong impact on consumers' emotional responses. In arousal and dominance, the provocative ad and humorous provocative ad got signifi-

FIGURE 1
AdSAM

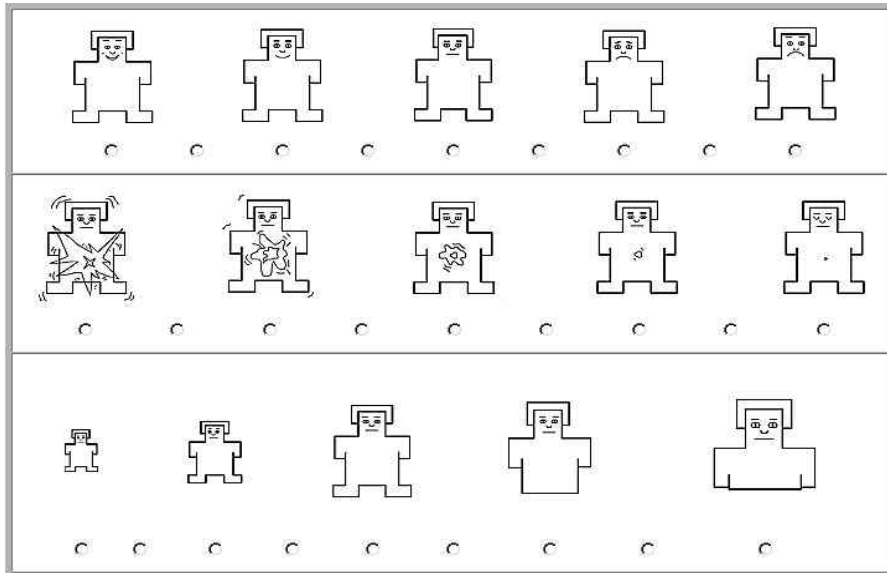
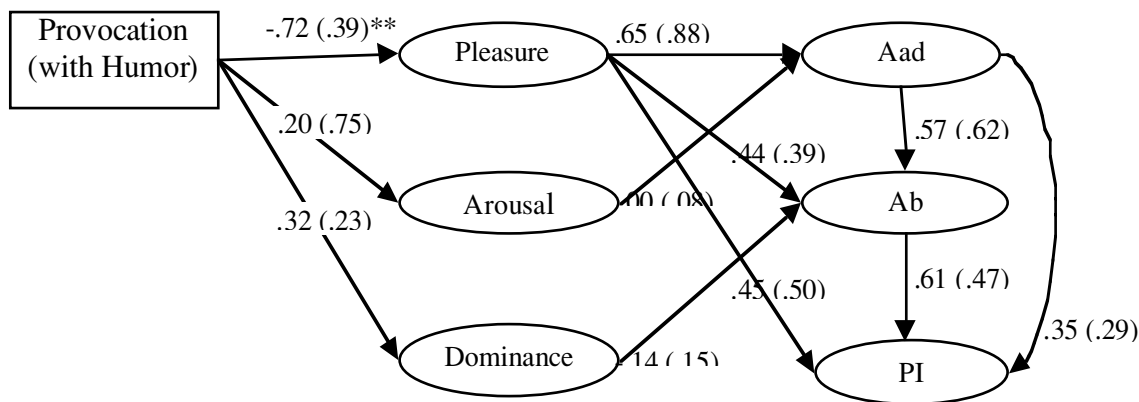


FIGURE 2

Multi-group LISREL Structural Equation Modeling with correlated measurement errors between Aad and Ab.



cantly higher scores than the general ad and the brand name only ad. On the pleasure dimension, the response to the provocative ad is significantly different than to the humorous provocative ad. Based on the MANOVA results, perceived pleasure levels for the humorous provocative ad and the general ad are significantly more positive than the provocative ad and the brand name only ad.

Overall, if one were to choose the general ad over the humorous provocative ad because of the Aad score the level of PI would be lower. If PAD were to be used in combination to select the ad with the better relationship to purchase intention, then the humorous provocative ad would have been selected. The combination of the PAD, therefore, provides better information than Aad when selecting between a provocative, a humorous provocative and a general ad.

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Relational Listening and Impression Management in Salesperson-Customer Relationships

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a qualitative study that investigates how salesperson-customer relationships are affected by the listening behaviors exhibited by salespersons, impression management strategies employed, and the interaction between these.

Interpersonal communication between salespersons and customers is recognized as an important part of successful sales interactions (Comer and Drollinger 1999). While communication has two distinct aspects—expressive behaviors (e.g., talking) and recognition behaviors (e.g., listening) (Nichols 1995)—studies of communication behaviors have remained grounded in expressive aspects. Poor listening behavior has been identified as a key component of salesperson failure, costing American businesses billions of dollars (Brownell 1990; Steil, Barker, and Watson 1983). However, listening still remains the least understood component of the communication process (Ramsey and Sohi 1997).

This paper derives its theoretical foundation from seminal work on impression management as well as more narrowly focused work on the role of listening in salesperson-customer interactions. Though marketing scholars have studied impression management in the context of personal selling (cf, Harris and Spiro 1981), this work fails to consider the role of listening among impression management strategies. To fuse these two conceptual bases, we adopt a relational perspective of listening.

From an analytical perspective, impression management may be described as a macro-level term that encompasses micro-level processes (e.g., attention to demeanor, attire, expressive communication, and listening). Studies of service encounters and sales performance traditionally employ quantitative methods, unpacking key components of interactions and failing to capture the role of impression management. We employ a qualitative approach to reconstitute these variables.

Data were collected from 11 informants (customers of realtors) via in-depth, semi-structured interviews, resulting in thick description of issues from informants' perspectives, and enabling interviewers to probe about listening behaviors, idealized images of realtors, marketing outcome variables, and motivations and explanations for behaviors uncovered.

The results of our study, consistent with Nichols (1995), revealed that listening was clearly identifiable as a unique aspect of communication. Two informants highlighted listening as *the key criterion* distinguishing good sales performance. The remaining identified listening as a significant component of the salesperson-customer relationship.

All of the components of listening found by Ramsey and Sohi (1997), sensing, evaluating, and responding, appeared in our data. This typology is predicated, in part, on the work of Castleberry and Shepherd (1993, p. 36) who define salesperson listening as "the cognitive process of actively sensing, interpreting, evaluating and responding to the verbal and nonverbal messages of present or potential customers." By including an affective dimension, we found we were better able to account for our informant's depictions of listening. Our data revealed six components of listening: cognitive sensing, cognitive evaluating, cognitive responding, affective sensing, affective evaluating, and affective responding.

Cognitive sensing includes aspects of listening related to focusing on one's audience (e.g., maintenance of eye contact and alertness). Affective sensing refers to a more relational level of

understanding. Cognitive evaluations involved salespersons asking direct questions of the customer, while affective evaluations related to the salesperson trying (in the words of one informant) to "see the house through the customer's eyes." Cognitive responding related to performing tasks material to the transaction itself (e.g., showing houses appropriate to customer criteria and scheduling appointments convenient to informants). Informants experienced affective responding as attending to underlying needs and desires, requiring increased sensitivity to customers by realtors. The affective dimension should not be associated with positive impressions; it is the nature of the listening and not the outcome that distinguishes cognitive from affective components.

Findings suggest that listening behaviors contributed to overall impressions created by realtors. Further, the extent to which actual behaviors exhibited by realtors corresponded with idealized expectations held by customers determined customer satisfaction with the salesperson. Intriguingly, our informants demonstrated a readiness to justify behaviors of salespersons in order to bring idealized and actualized behaviors into greater correspondence, ultimately producing a positive perception of the overall service experience.

This study expands our understanding of listening in the context of sales communication. It tests and extends the scales of Ramsey and Sohi (1997), suggesting cognitive and affective dimensions of these. The results build into this existing model the concept of the salesperson's idealized image, perceived image and the overlap between the two. In this sense, the work also contributes to the literature on impression management. It explicitly links salesperson's listening behavior to impression management activities, unfolding an unexplored facet of impression management. In highlighting the underlying dynamism in this process of overlap, we argue that customers help salespersons co-construct the overall service space impression through a variety of strategies. When impressions match expectations, customers use strategies such as constructing motives behind a salesperson's actions and highlighting aspects of salesperson behavior to reinforce the positive experience. When expectations do not match reality, customers utilize strategies aimed at creating an overall positive impression of the full service-space, including assigning meanings to certain salesperson activities, trying to reconcile others, justifying the outcomes, or expressing helplessness.

This paper highlights this mediating role played by impression management. It is this mediation that allows us to understand those situations wherein there is only a partial overlap between the expected images and actual impressions and the process through which customers reconcile these, overlooking incongruent elements to gain a better overall impression.

The context of our study differs significantly from that of Ramsey and Sohi (1997) and plays an important role in the overall findings, shedding light on the distinction between extended service encounters and other commercial sales activity that is more limited in duration. This allowed us to discern differences between realtors and car salespersons, for example, in the extent to which each has the capacity to utilize listening skills to create and maintain impressions. Our study suggests that there exist cognitive and affective dimensions of listening, and that a temporal dimension may moderate these. Many informants noted that listening behaviors exhibited by salespersons, and the overall impressions created,

changed as the relationship evolved. This may make the affective dimensions more pronounced in more relational selling environments and affect the degree of correlation between listening and impression management.

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Materialism and Illegal Enterprise: A Life Stories Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The years of economic growth and concomitant personal prosperity and consumption of the 1990's were mirrored by rapid growth in the U.S. prison population. Many of the crimes leading to incarceration were related to illegal enterprises that met consumption needs and desires. The researchers conducted depth interviews with male inmates at a minimum-security prison to examine the marketing characteristics of illegal enterprise, incorporating sociological and psychological theory to guide the interviews and interpret the data. Research conclusions provide insights into consumer misbehavior, and its antecedents and consequences.

In 2002, two seemingly unrelated trends were occurring in the United States. First, after the end of a recession in 1992, strong economic growth combined with productivity increases in the last five years of the decade (Jorgensen and Stiroh 2000) to produce an economic boom. The major stock market indices soared to unprecedented levels, and unemployment dropped significantly. Most American consumers enjoyed the fruits of their prosperity. *Per capita* income and household assets increased across all ethnic segments, resulting in high levels of disposable income and spending on luxury items.

During the same time period, however, U.S. prisons were full, reflecting two decades of sharp increases in both crime and convictions.¹ The Department of Justice noted in its 2001 annual report that 3.1%, or 1 one in every 32 adults in the U.S. was currently in the correctional system (www.usdoj.gov).

The contradictory patterns of increased consumer wealth and increased prison population growth suggest that not everyone benefits from economic growth in the same way. We follow longstanding sociological theory in suggesting a structural explanation for some consumption practices that casts doubt on the assumption of personal agency prevalent in marketing research. Specifically, we propose that while the salience of material acquisition and the *desire* to consume may have been commonly experienced, the *routes* for achieving personal consumption objectives differed widely among groups of consumers. In this paper, we describe research findings suggestive of a discrepancy between the desire to consume and the ability to consume which creates anomie, or perceived strain. We show examples of strain theory (cf., Merton 1957), in which divergence between the desires and opportunities of people in a society may motivate people to circumvent socially acceptable means of achieving socially desired goals.

This paper explores the specific motivations of criminals. We conducted depth interviews with inmates in a men's minimum-security prison to examine the prisoners' motivations, looking for the existence of materialism as a socially desired goal and of anomie, or strain, as a motivator for achieving the goal. Of particu-

lar interest were the specific mechanisms that criminals use both to address the disparities they see in their lived experience and to increase their chances of success in their chosen actions and lifestyles. Our objective is to provide insight into the lives and consumption practices of this under-researched set of consumers, as well as insights into consumer behavior through an enriched understanding of misbehavior.

This paper is organized as follows. First, we present the general research questions that motivated the study. These questions also guided the form and content of the interviews that served as the basis of data for this research. Next, we describe the research method, including the group studied, the setting, and the interview format. This description provides insight into the strengths and limitations of the study method, and it provides a context for the results discussed subsequently. Analysis and interpretation of the interview data is developed within the context of a general theoretical model. Key emergent themes and their relevance for illegal consumer behavior are also discussed.

RESEARCH MOTIVATION

While consumer behavior research has gained significant momentum in the past three decades, it has typically looked for mechanisms to explain how consumers generally behave. Research that tests the limits of this behavior, however,—what we will call misbehavior—has been nearly non-existent. Several consumer researchers (e.g., Albers-Miller 1999) have noted that consumer misbehavior is a subset of consumer behavior, and that insights about the broader topic of consumer behavior may be obtained by considering the forces and characteristics of behaviors that contravene societal norms. Holbrook (1987) includes consumer misbehavior in his cross-disciplinary constellation of consummation.

One purpose of our research was to develop a preliminary understanding of when and how consumer misbehavior occurs. Sociological research on deviant behavior and criminology suggests strain theory and its variants as one mechanism to explain misbehavior. A simplified description of strain theory is that strain occurs due to the inability to get what others have, and deviant behaviors serve as a means to reduce the strain.

Clearly, however, not all forms of perceived strain lead to the same expression. While some might react to strain by trying harder through legitimate means, others may be similarly motivated to use illegitimate means. For yet another group, strain may lead to attempts to minimize the perceived discomfort through such escapist behaviors as drug use or drinking. The latter two expressions of strain are the focus of this paper.

To investigate the antecedents and consequences of consumer misbehavior, we focused on the independent roles that materialism and the environment play in consumption-related behavior. Materialism was deemed important because the centrality of possessions can serve as a precondition for strain. Given their tangible, conspicuous nature, material goods are often a very salient indicator of success. The concept of one's environment—both proximate and historical—was addressed because it may create a context that affects ability to consume. For instance, growing up in an environment in which education is neither valued nor facilitated may lead a person to undervalue the importance of educational achievement for attaining life goals, many of which may be consumption-related. Family structure may similarly affect the relationship between

¹One reviewer has suggested that changes in laws and in the degree of enforcement of laws would also explain the increase in crime statistics. We take the position that, prior to committing their crime, criminals are to some extent aware of changes in the legal system relating to laws and enforcement of those laws. Thus while both what is considered a crime and the probability of being caught may change over time, the existence of the decision to engage in criminal behavior remains constant.

materialism and strain. Rindfleisch et al. (1997) found that young adults that came from disrupted families (i.e., single parent families) were likely to be more materialistic and to participate in compulsive consumption behavior. We suggest that strain may have been the mechanism by which these results occurred.

Because we see consumption-related behavior as an interaction between materially focused goals and inability-induced strain, we focused our study on these behaviors, anticipating that different forms of consumption, such as consumption to meet short versus longer-term goals, might provide useful insights into the strategies used to reduce perceived strain.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Setting

The interviews used to develop the data for this research were conducted at a men's minimum-security prison in southeastern Oklahoma. Permission to interview inmates was obtained from the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, following submission of a research proposal that delimited the scope, goals, and anticipated impact of the study on the participants.

This particular prison was selected for two reasons. First, the nature of crimes for which the inmates were serving time was commensurate with the marketing and consumption focus of this research. Prison statistics indicated that the majority of crimes involved the illegal transfer of property, such as burglaries, larcenies, and drug distribution. Second, the sensitive nature of the research topic created the potential for difficulty getting inmates to agree to be interviewed, as well as difficulty in obtaining detailed, open descriptions of their life events. Trust between the inmates and the interviewer had to be established. The interviewer's mother was a teacher at the prison, and had worked with several of the inmates who agreed to be interviewed. Their respect and trust in her led them to recruit other inmates, and to willingly discuss incriminating, but not prosecuted, consumption-related activities. Several of the inmates commented either during or after the interviews that they would not have participated if they had not believed they could trust their teacher.

Participants and Procedure

The inmates interviewed for this research were twelve men who were serving time for a variety of crimes, including burglary, drug distribution, and manslaughter. The men volunteered their time and histories following an announcement by a teacher in the education program. Seven of the inmates were students in the program; four were friends or dorm mates of the students. The men ranged in age from eighteen to forty-two. Eight of the men were African-American, one was Native American, and three were Caucasian. The interviewer was a woman in her early thirties, and in her eighth month of pregnancy.

The men were interviewed individually. The interviews took place in a rear office in a mobile home on the prison grounds, while classes were held in the front room. The inmate sat facing the interviewer across a thirty inch table. On the table were two tape recorders, and pencils and paper for the interviewer's notes.

Participants were escorted to the interview by a uniformed guard. The interviewer requested permission to record the interview, which was granted in all cases.² Eleven interviews were

obtained for analysis. The interviews ranged in length from thirty-five minutes to two and one-half hours, and they resulted in 11,267 verbatim lines of transcript (245 pages).

The interviews followed the long interview method detailed in McCracken (1988), with a goal of developing a life story (Tagg 1985) for each inmate. The interviewer began with a set of demographic questions, which provided the researchers with basic information and put the inmates at ease. Responses to these questions served as jumping-off points for developing the life stories. Following the guidelines for qualitative research proposed by Corbin and Strauss (1990), the interviewer adjusted the form and content of questions and prompts, building flexibility into the research process to reflect changes in understanding and insight afforded by previous comments.

Data Analysis and Levels of Content Comparison

Data analysis post-interview was completed in stages. First, the interviews were transcribed and numbered, line-by-line. Next, the researchers read the transcripts, noting concepts representative of the three *a priori* research categories. Comparisons across the researchers' notes and memos were conducted to ascertain whether the researchers noted similar concepts, and the extent to which the emergent concepts were based on the same interview material. In the next stage of analysis, concepts were abstracted to reflect categories of content related to the three foci of this research. One objective in this stage was to establish whether concepts that shared a category assignment provided insight into the antecedents and consequences of the illegal enterprises and other deviant behaviors.

CONCEPT CONSTRUAL AS EMERGENT THEMES

Content analysis of the transcribed data was conducted after the interviews were completed, although informal evaluation during the interview process enabled the interviewer to adjust questions and prompts so that later interviews explored areas of interest that had been uncovered in earlier interviews.

The focus on material goods was clear throughout many of the interviews, while a discrepancy between society's emphasis of material goods and the lack of opportunities the prisoners had to acquire these goods became clear to the researchers independently during the analysis process. An additional theme, involving the acquisition and use of an intuitive understanding of the marketplace, emerged in the data analysis and interpretation process. These themes will be explored in the following sections.

Theme #1: We are living in a material world.

Richins and Dawson (1992, p. 304) cite Mukerji (1983) in defining materialism as "a cultural system in which material interests are not made subservient to other social goals," and suggest that materialism includes acquisition centrality, acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, and possession-defined success. Belk (1985, p. 265) sees materialism more specifically as the second dimension, and provides the term "happiness-seeking via consumption." Historically considered incompatible with religion (Belk 1985), it is not surprising that social stereotypes exist pertaining to the types of products materialists value, as differentiated from non-materialists (Richins 1994).

Any discussion of materialism must also elicit the question of what role possessions play in our lives. Is materialism symbolic of a deeper, more important need or value? Bourdieu (1986) sees capital in general as "accumulated labor," gained throughout generations of work, of which economic capital is one part. In this sense, then, it is possible to view materialism as the desire to attain economic capital in lieu of (or as an indicator of) other forms of

²One inmate returned to the interview room and demanded that his interview be erased. The interview included details of plans for a prison uprising. The researcher handed the cassette to the inmate with alacrity. He thanked her and left.

capital (i.e., social capital or cultural capital) particularly among groups who are disadvantaged in society. It may be that the desire for (and happiness derived from) possessions merely signals the attainment of this capital as a signaling mechanism.

The difficulty involved in identifying materialism derives partly from the existence of two types of meaning of possessions—public and private (Richins 1994). Private meanings result from the personal satisfaction of possessing, while public meanings consider the communicative function of possessing. Materialism is not acquisition *per se*, but rather an effect of the motivation for acquisition that includes a preference for possessions above the preference for other goals (Mukerji 1983). The prisoners interviewed in this study, however, showed clear indications of the desire for possessions over other types of capital. They may have seen the acquisition of possessions—economic capital in Bourdieu's (1986) framework—as a substitute for the lack of social or cultural capital available to them.

Michael³ provides a clear example of the type of materialism encountered in the interviews. He describes his motivation not as need for money, but rather as a want for money. “*I sold drugs for the money. Greed is what it was.*” Interestingly, he shows a desire to follow the socially accepted route to achieving his material desires. As the manager of a clothing store, he describes going with his nephew to make a car payment, and

They had this Cadillac. This 1988 Fleetwood Cadillac, and I saw it, and I said ‘that’s beautiful, man.’ It was champagne. I mean it was beautiful. It was beautiful!

It seems clear that Michael is showing materialism for the goods themselves (the car), but is also exhibiting the type of materialism referred to by Merton (1957, p. 189) as a “heavy emphasis upon monetary success as a goal in a society.” This represents a situation where the focus has moved from an emphasis on the goods that money can acquire to an emphasis on the money as a goal in itself.

Throughout the interviews were references to material goods. Raymond remembers that he “*wanted to dress nice*” while in high school, and that his friends “*had their own car [and] . . . dressed nice.*” Numerous mentions of high-priced cars, such as Cadillacs and Lamborghinis were made across inmates. Comparison with others who had nice cars was evident in Leon’s comment: “*They all out on the streets, you know, big Caddys . . . [and] I’m locked up, man.*”

Other uses of material goods were seen. Some uses were symbolic. For instance, Michael received the gift of gold tooth jewelry in the shape of a dollar sign from one of his prostitutes. Leon, a gang member, discussed the use of gang colors to show allegiance to the gang, and his mother’s lack of awareness when he requested she buy him blue clothes to represent his gang. Possessions represented the achievement of material success for Carl Gene. His success consisted of “*a three bedroom house, . . . a cellar in my backyard, a two-car garage with a[n] apartment above it.*” Lastly, Lloyd used his television as a mechanism to avoid becoming attached to friends. With two, twenty-year sentences, he avoided becoming “*attached to ‘em [people], because they gonna, they gonna leave. . . . That TV will be my friend. McGyver? I watch McGyver.*”

Money also served as an ultimate rather than an instrumental goal (Richins & Dawson 1992). Raymond did “*everything but murder and rape. . . . Everything between those that you could call*

illegal to obtain some money.” For Leon, making money was a justification for his family moving to Oklahoma. “*You know it’s alright. I don’t like it, but you know they making money, so [laughs].*” Steven, discussing his motivation for selling drugs as opposed to stealing cars, says that the motive for car theft was the thrill, and to “*get away with it,*” while selling drugs was to “*get more money.*”

Theme #2: You can’t always get what you want.

Anomie Theory, also known as Strain Theory, was developed by Durkheim (1893, 1984) and popularized by Merton (1957). The theory postulates that strain occurs when wealth opportunities are not equally available to all members of a society. A segment which feels blocked from access may experience frustration at the divergence between its current level of wealth (for example) and that level valued by society. This frustration leads to the use of mechanisms to attain wealth that are not sanctioned as appropriate by the society—specifically, criminal activities. Merton suggested that the existence of anomie would be particularly evident among societies where there is an “exceptionally strong emphasis upon specific goals without a corresponding emphasis upon institutional procedures” (Merton 1957, p. 188). This characterizes the typical social surroundings of the prisoners studied.

Sociological theories of deviant behavior are of two general types: those that emphasize social structure’s impact on behavior and those that emphasize the learned nature of the behavior (Clinard and Meier 1989). Strain Theory represents the structural approach, and explains criminal behavior as a logical result of a society that values wealth, but which also simultaneously prevents some segments of that society from achieving that wealth. Typical segments include “the poor, those who belong to the lower class, and persons of certain racial and ethnic groups who are discriminated against” (Clinard & Meier 1989, p. 81). In order to provide support for Strain Theory in the data, it is necessary to show that (1) the prisoners represent some socially disadvantaged segment of society, and (2) that they value the socially-encouraged goal of materialism to the extent that they are willing to sidestep the socially accepted mechanisms for achieving it. The next section shows that the data support these criteria.

Social disadvantage among the prisoners studied comes from a variety of sources. Many of the subjects discussed either personal or family problems with alcoholism or drugs. Chris, when speaking of growing up in a single-parent household, mentioned his father’s death in 1980: “*He was doin’ drugs and drinkin’.*” Poverty was mentioned in a number of the cases. Chris describes working on an apartment, “*because the place was in so bad a shape that they let us live there for a year [rent free] if we’d fix it up.*”

Many of the inmates were brought up in single-parent households, and a number experienced the death of a parent early in life. One had a parent who also had a criminal history. Indicative of these early losses, a number of the prisoners mentioned the self-defense motivation as a reason for committing their crimes, although it wasn’t clear that this was not merely an attempt to avoid responsibility for their actions. For instance, one prisoner described his gang membership as “just protecting yourself” and describes the randomness by which he perceives the potential actions of others by describing people with “crazy moods:”

Like, I could be sitting over there on a certain day or something and someone drives up and says ‘Hey, there’s a Crip. We ain’t got nothing better to do. Let’s shoot him’ (Interview, Steven).

Socially acceptable mechanisms for achieving material wealth include working, saving, or sacrificing in order to purchase goods.

³The names have all been changed to preserve the anonymity of the inmates.

The prisoners showed the opposite tendency by acquiring desired goods in the short run. It is also apparent, in a number of interviews, that alcohol played a role in the sub-optimal decisions. For example, one prisoner describes the sequence of events leading to his capture:

I was out partying. Got into the car with some good friends at the time. We went out to take out some frustrations. Driving around, got hungry. We left our wallets back at the hotel that we were partying at. Walked into a store. I figured we'd just take what we wanted and he'd let us. But he didn't. So we ended up robbing the place instead of just something to eat. (Interview, Chris)

Asked whether he would be attracted to drugs and alcohol after he left the facility, Chris pointed out that both “are very available here where I’m at.” Another pointed out “I couldn’t even honestly say that if I was to be let out today if I wouldn’t in a short time go back to [using drugs] again” (Interview, Morris).

Examples of alcohol and drug use also relate directly to the previous discussion of strain. Explaining how his life turned to crime, one prisoner discusses partying with a bunch of guys out at the lake. “Drugs. Then we started stealing, so we could party without having to worry about paying for it (Interview, Chris).

Another inmate mentions the role of other people in his criminal activities:

I was involved with five other people . . . I was pretty young then. And one of them had a circle that had a beer joint . . . a bar? And so we were out drinking and we wanted some more money so we went by his uncle’s bar and he got in a big argument with him and so we left and came back. And him and his friends went in there and robbed his uncle. They beat his uncle up and took the money for some beer (Interview, Morris).

While for some prisoners, the involvement in drugs provided an incentive for committing the crime, for others, the drug involvement was a more direct result of strain. For example, Morris put it succinctly: “Mostly pot, But I’m not opposed to dealing with anything else if I can . . . if I see that there’s a profit in it.”

Another prisoner, a cocaine dealer convicted of manslaughter, described his drug sales income as “at least \$2000 a week” and, when asked about his future criminal activity, he described the probability of continuing when we got out of prison as a function of future employment opportunities not in line with his skill and experience level:

I wouldn’t do it if I could make some money. Like what an average person would make. Not no working at McDonald’s, then I wouldn’t take that kind of job (Interview, Rich).

It is apparent that Rich’s “average person” is not a minimum wage earner, as when he was later asked about a minimum wage job, he replied definitely, “I wouldn’t take that job.” His future goal was to get his GED and become an attorney. Again, however, he seemed to show expectations inconsistent with his skill and experience set. His expectations seem to indicate his continued willingness to go outside the social structure by committing crime, as he discusses his career goal:

If I can make that, then I wouldn’t do what I have to do. But then if I couldn’t, then I would probably go back to the same old thing [selling drugs] (Interview, Rich).

Motivations for selling drugs and stealing cars, jewelry, and money were different for Steven. For stealing, it was the pleasure of joy riding in someone’s car, and the feeling of getting away with it. He also mentions the process of selling the cars for a profit through the use of “swap shops.” It was possible to “just drive in and have everything redone,” to allow the sale of the car. For drug sales, however, the motivation was simply monetary.

An additional aspect of strain discussed by Rose (1966) is a “cultural apathy,” which implies withdrawal from the culture. At numerous points in the data there seems to be a lack of consideration for the personal and social consequences of the criminal actions undertaken by the criminals. It may be, however, that rather than a withdrawal from the culture in general, this strain is the result of an allegiance to a subcultural norm that is different from norms found in the dominant culture. For example, one nineteen year-old describes his rise through the ranks of the Los Angeles Cripps as a “baby gangsta,” noting rituals and traditions that guide gang behavior. His information supports work by Rosenfeld (1989), who suggests that there must be conformity to some alternate norm for deviance to occur.

Theme #3: Knowing your market, and satisfying it.

Another theme that emerged during analysis was that of intuitive consumer marketing insight. The prisoners, typically with a low level of education, cited situations which indicated an understanding of effective business activities, describing techniques and processes with which they increased their efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out illegal enterprise and fostering illegal consumption. The prisoners employed practices that reflect commonly held business objectives, including understanding the psychology (e.g., needs, wants, desires) of the consumer; building the brand; developing customer loyalty; establishing reliable channels of distribution; and making money.

Iterative comparisons of concepts extracted by the researchers revealed groupings and linkages between the concepts that enabled concept categorization. The concepts consisted of three general types: (1) awareness of benefits deriving from the products/services provided; (2) awareness of the infrastructure involved in product/service provision; and (3) use of an opportunistic approach to maximizing the potential revenue stream of the market. These categories are consistent with commonly used criteria for gauging the potential efficacy of a business model. For example, Osterwalder and Pigneur (2002) characterize a complete business model as containing 1) a value proposition through product innovation; 2) a delivery infrastructure; and 3) financials.⁴

Awareness of product/service benefits took a number of forms. One example is the adoption of a personal shopper approach in order to more appropriately meet consumer needs. Bobby describes the service he provided in acquiring previously demanded products:

I would already have somebody who’d want to buy it, and they would come to me and ‘Bobby, I need a screen door, I need a . . .,’ I’d go get it, or a TV. I’d break into the house and get a TV, a radio, whatever I could find.

Steven provides additional examples when recounting his transition from using drugs to selling them. “I sold drugs since I can

⁴The authors also include a fourth component, customer relationships, which they believe attains additional importance for their focus on e-business. Other treatments of models in traditional marketing environments subsume relationships within the delivery infrastructure component.

remember . . . My friends tell me 'Hey, I need such and such' . . . I give it to them." Providing personal shopping services for friends was echoed later as well. Steven broke into a store because he "wanted something new to wear, and we missed the shops before they closed, and my girl wanted something."

Recognizing the importance of providing benefits to the consumer was also observed in Michael's description of the training process through which he put his prostitutes. He explains the technique involved in determining what the customer's needs/wants are: "You analyze the situation. . . . You had to look at each individual situation . . . I mean, what would work on him might not work on him." Michael also indicates recognition of the importance of providing benefits through building the brand and maintaining the brand image. A prostitute was motivated to continue in his employ because, "she wanted that prestige that went along [with working for me] . . . because, you know, just like a good pimp is held high, a good prostitute is too."

The second set of long-term practices involved an awareness of the infrastructure involved in product/service provision. Topics covered in this area include management of stakeholders and employees, relationship development and management, and issues relating to the distribution channel for the illegal products and services. Michael indicates a consideration for his employees and customers that borders on the romantic. "You know, although women may see it as love. . . I sell dreams. You know, I sell a lot of dreams." He reminds us that no matter what his employees think, he is in business for the money, in contrast with some of his prostitutes, who are in it because they like the pimp. His relationship with the prostitutes was characterized by an instrumental paternalism. "I take care of them, you know."

The importance of relationship development was particularly apparent in the distribution channel for drugs. Rich describes the care taken to minimize the risk of arrest in the selling process by continuing a past relationship with a customer. "Sometime[s] I would [be scared to sell to the wrong person]. It [would] depend on who it was, and if I didn't know him . . . then I'd be scared." Morris discusses the role of his past experience and intuition in determining whom was safe to sell to and in finding new customers. "I don't have no difficulty. I can just go into like a city and within a very short period of time. . . I keep right on top of the drug network." Michael discusses the importance of connections in the process of transacting call girl business with a new customer. He describes a hypothetical new meeting:

There's a lot of references involved, you know. . . . Who's this, man? Is this Snake, man? I'm a friend of Danny. Yeah, Danny Boy? Yeah, look here man, I need to send you a picture or what? Nah, man, Danny Boy's cool. I know Danny Boy. I know he's cool man. Just send him on down here, man. I'm ready.

Steven shows a detailed understanding of the profit structure of a distribution channel in his explanation of "swap shops"—specialized operations that repaint and re-title stolen cars, representing the demand side of the channel. These shops buy stolen cars, paying as much as \$15,000 or \$20,000 for a \$35,000 Cadillac. Value chain contributions are made as the shops "paint 'em [and] change everything else back out [so the car is] legal. [Then] sell 'em to the car lots."

The third long-term goal relevant to the development of a business model revealed efforts to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of the revenue or profit stream in the business situation. For some of the prisoners, protection of the revenue stream simply meant putting practices into place to avoid getting caught for the illegal enterprise. Raymond describes how his drug addiction was

the key factor in his capture and in the subsequent interruption of revenue. "I been selling [cocaine] since '85, and [didn't get caught] 'til '89 [pause], till I started smoking cocaine." Another drug dealer had two jobs in order to avoid raising the suspicion of police.

I was still [emphasis] servin' dope, . . . I [worked] just to keep police off of me. 'Cause they see me ridin' around in a big Cadillac or something, this young, and I ain't got no job, they keep sweatin' it. But I had two jobs, so they can't really sweat it (Interview, Leon).

TOWARD A MODEL OF ILLEGAL CONSUMPTION AND ENTERPRISE

Our analyses suggest the presence of a relationship between the social and economic context of the prisoners; their exposure to and awareness of the idea that the acquisition of material goods is a socially recognized, beneficial norm; and the resulting application of strain theory to explain participation in illegal enterprise. Specifically, we found that the lack of ability to achieve material goals resulted in strain that motivated the criminal activities. While it was clear that the prisoners were disadvantaged in some of the traditionally recognized ways, it was also apparent that they had an intuitive awareness for marketing mechanisms which increased the efficiency with which their material goals were achieved.

Crimes such as burglary and theft seem motivated directly by one of the dimensions of materialism hypothesized by Richins and Dawson—that of the "pursuit of happiness through acquisition" (Richins & Dawson 1992, p. 304)—as indicated by the references to cars and jewelry in the data. The materialistic desires of the subjects were for particularly socially supported material items that would be used for public rather than private consumption.

Given that materialism was recognized by the prisoners as a "culturally defined goal," (Merton 1957, p. 187) and that the prisoners were not able to use socially appropriate means to achieve this goal, we believe that a strain developed which served as a motivation to circumvent the traditional means of acquisition. A disconnect occurred between the acceptable means of achieving goals and the deviant means to doing so, such that the former lost their status.

It is important to note, however, that not all members of disadvantaged groups turn to crime as their solution, although one must expect that they feel the same strain as the criminals. Opportunity Theory (Cloward and Ohlin 1960) suggests that, given strain, differential opportunity for committing crime exists such that there must be some exposure to deviant behavior for the member of the disadvantaged group to adopt the behavior. This suggests that what is required for deviant behavior is not only strain between a socially desired goal and its achievement, but also the opportunity to participate in the behavior. We learned from the life histories of the prisoners studied that this opportunity, while presenting itself in a variety of ways consistent with the varied geographic, ethnic, and familial backgrounds of our subjects, existed in nearly all instances.

The inmates we interviewed had a clear, if intuitive, understanding of marketing practices for illegal enterprise, including the awareness of the importance of the benefits provided to their customers, the need for a delivery infrastructure, and the importance of a revenue stream and profit through the illegal sales activity. Experience with the consumption of illegal products, or with the distribution of such products, may not only obviate recognition that such activity deviates from social and legal norms, but may also provide incidentally acquired knowledge and expertise about how to manage illegal marketer-consumer transactions.

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The concepts and categories extracted from the interview indicate that tendencies toward the major constructs of the study (i.e., materialism, strain, and context) are shown in the prisoners' behaviors. In addition, the analysis and interpretation reveal the use of intuitive marketing practices as a means for managing perceived strain.

The interviewed prisoners were typically from disadvantaged backgrounds, growing up in single parent households, frequently with a tendency (either familial or personal) for alcohol or other drug abuse. Their backgrounds, however, did not prevent (and perhaps encouraged) their awareness that acquisition of material wealth plays a major role in social life in the United States. Significant in our findings are the role that materialism played in the prisoners' lives in general and their crimes in particular, the strain that resulted from their lack of ability to achieve material success, and the use they made of what we have termed intuitive marketing practices to achieve material goals.

This study has several limitations. First, the somewhat small sample size of prisoners prevents the research from achieving the optimal degree of data saturation. Ideally, interviewing would continue until the researcher began experiencing redundancy in the data. In other words, when s/he began receiving only repetitive information without gaining new insights, the interviewing process would stop. In response to this limitation, we suggest that the insight gained from this unique access opportunity offsets the sample size concern.

Second, the compressed time frame of the interviews, due to the limited window of access to the population, did not allow the degree of immersion desirable of many qualitative research endeavors. Subsequent research, if access to a similar population is obtained, would ideally cover a longer time frame. Last, traditional procedures of data verification were not possible. For instance, the usual practice would be to attempt to triangulate interview data with other data sources such as prison records and interviews with family members in order to improve validity. To address this concern, time lines were constructed with the information from the interviews, and events occurrences were cross-checked for coherence and plausibility. In addition, descriptions of events within the prison environment were corroborated in discussions with the prison warden and other personnel.

A last limitation of the study results from the delay between the commission of the crime and the participation in the interview.⁵ It may be that the motivations for committing the crime are imperfectly accessible to the prisoner months or years later during the interview. Further, it is possible that the prisoner's construction of reality may have changed between the crime and the interview such that events are recalled in a way inconsistent with their original construal. Given that one goal of incarceration is reform, we see this as a legitimate criticism. It may be that the incarceration process systematically changes the construction of prisoner's reality such that their recollection of past events is through the looking glass of present reality. While impossible to quantify, we see the purpose of this research as providing insight into criminal behavior which may be expanded upon in subsequent study.

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⁵This discussion is based on reviewer comments.

Direct-to-Consumer Advertising: Obligated to be Healthy

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ABSTRACT

Direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) of prescription drugs is a relatively recent form of marketing communication. Advocates suggest that DTCA both informs and empowers patients/consumers. But viewed from a wider sociological perspective, DTCA is premised upon and extends aspects of lifestyle choice, self-responsibility and risk assessment. As a result, DTCA promotes a medicalized view of society, where everyday aspects of life come to be defined as medical problems seeking the input of medical specialists and medical technology. The anti-obesity drug Xenical provides context for DTCA in this paper. Xenical, as an example of a 'lifestyle drug', uses the body as a focus of disciplinary power for surveillance medicine. Within a health promotion framework, individuals targeted by DTCA are obliged to govern themselves in the interests of their own health.

Direct-to-consumer advertising

The advertising of prescription drugs was once targeted solely at health care professionals through medical journals and health care trade publications. But more recently, the advertising of prescription medications has begun to bypass these traditional communication channels. Pharmaceutical companies are increasingly targeting their marketing messages directly at the patient/consumer through efforts such as direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA). DTCA is defined here as the communication of product-specific information on prescription drugs that is targeted at end-users and designed to encourage consumers to take a more active role within the prescribing process.

Since the easing of advertising restrictions by the US Food and Drug Administration in 1997, the US has seen rapid growth in DTCA (Mintzes 2001). Spending on DTCA in the US for the year 2000 was approximately \$2.5 billion (Jewesson 2002) and budgets look set to increase with DTCA predicted to be the fastest growing major advertising category, outperforming technology, fast food, and soft drink categories (Pinto 2000). Despite this rapid growth, the United States and New Zealand remain the only two developed countries that currently allow DTCA of prescription drugs (Calfee 2002).

DTCA enables pharmaceutical companies to bypass the traditional and long-standing conventions governing the doctor-patient relationship where the health care professional was seen as the possessor of 'expert knowledge' (Nettleton 1995). Surrounded in medical mystique, the role of the doctor was once seen as manager of disease, having authority to dispense medical therapies and working in the interests of what was best for the patient (Pines 1999). In contrast, the role of the patient was passive with diminished capacity for independent thinking (Henderson and Petersen 2002). But Pines (1999, p. 498) asserts that 'the mystique of the medicine chest has eroded' and in this new 'information age' patients as consumers often have access to as much information as physicians about possible health care products. This new active citizenship, where the 'patient' is the client or consumer (Henderson and Petersen 2002) implies that individuals are able to make decisions independently and use information that is available to them.

Advocates suggest that DTCA is beneficial, because patients as customers are likely to be more participative in the decisions that affect their health (Wolfe 2002). Supporters of DTCA also point to the potential for patient empowerment through health education (Berger, Kark, Rosner, Packer, & Bennett 2001).

But critics question whether DTCA really represents progress in empowering patients or if instead, it is a way for pharmaceutical companies to make additional money (Drazen 2002). While providing educational information may be one of the industry's motives, Hollon (1999) suggests that "the bottom-line desire for profit is undoubtedly another". Jenkins (1998) describes DTCA of prescription medicines as a 'wonder drug' for the pharmaceutical industry itself because of its ability to affect patient demands that in turn might affect doctors' prescribing behavior.

This paper argues that DTCA, despite being a relatively new phenomenon, is a natural consequence of what Petersen & Lupton (1996) have termed the 'new public health', where health is seen as a moral enterprise that dictates and prescribes how we should live our lives individually and collectively. Since the mid-1970s, there has been a clear ideological shift away from the notion that the state should protect the health of individuals towards the idea that health is a self-governed lifestyle choice and that individuals should take responsibility to protect themselves from risk (Petersen 1997). As will be argued, the existence and growth of DTCA is a direct and natural consequence of this same ideological shift.

Having a healthy body and having the ability to achieve good health are predominant concerns of our age with a focus on lifestyle manifested by the increased attention given to body shape, diet and exercise (Burrows, Nettleton, & Bunton 1995; Petersen & Lupton 1996). DTCA privileges a medical perspective that is inherently bound up in the political and cultural discourses related to health and lifestyle. In addition, it is an important contention of this paper that the reality of DTCA, while ostensibly offering choice for consumers under the guise of freedom, actually suggests that power rests in the hands of marketers (Rose 1990; Venkatesh, Meamber, & Firat 1997).

Lifestyle drugs

Pharmaceutical companies have identified 'lifestyle' drugs as a growth market (Lexchin 2001), and DTCA has been intricately linked with the release of a number of these highly publicized 'lifestyle' drugs over recent years. Indeed, much of the growth in DTCA parallels the growth in the lifestyle drugs market. Lifestyle drugs can be defined as products that are used for health problems that might be better treated by a change in lifestyle (Gilbert, Walley, & New 2000). Sevon & Mitrany (1999) suggest that one consistent definition of lifestyle drugs is that they improve patients' satisfaction with the quality of their lives but do little to improve medical outcomes or reduce overall health care costs. According to Gilbert et al. (2000), lifestyle drugs are intended or become used for conditions that currently lie at the socially constructed boundary between lifestyle wishes and health needs.

In 1999, nearly \$325 million was spent on DTCA for just four lifestyle drugs in the US (Lexchin 2001): Propecia (finasteride) for the treatment of male pattern hair loss; Viagra (sildenafil) for the treatment of erectile dysfunction; Xenical (orlistat) for the treatment of obesity; and Zyban (bupropion) for the treatment of smoking.

DTCA has proved to be an ideal vehicle for promoting the conditions that lifestyle drugs are designed to treat because such conditions are easily understood, easily self-diagnosed and often self-evident (Lexchin 2001). Product development in the pharmaceutical industry is both difficult and expensive, and as a result, drug companies have increasingly focused on the unmet medical needs of the aging 'baby boomer' population. Age, gender and

lifestyle as risk characteristics mean that baby boomers become an ideal target because, as a population, they have easy access to medical information, are increasingly dissatisfied with the performance of healthcare systems and, most importantly, they have grown up being conditioned as consumers (MacNaught 2001). The growth in DTCA owes much to the confluence of these same factors. DTCA can be seen as an example of what Thompson and Hirschman (1995, p. 144) refer to as promotional discourses, where “the correct lifestyle and the correct application of consumer technologies offer a means to resist the forces of nature that might otherwise affect the body.”

In late 1999, Americans were exposed to an average of nine television advertisements for prescription drugs a day (Mintzes 2002) and according to Mintzes (2002 p. 909), these advertisements portray “the educational message of a pill for every ill—and increasingly an ill for every pill”. As a result, critics accuse the pharmaceutical industry of actively sponsoring the definition of diseases and promoting them to both prescribers and consumers: ‘the social construction of illness is being replaced by the corporate construction of disease’ (Moynihan, Heath, & Henry 2002, p. 886). According to Moynihan et al. (2002), informal alliances between the pharmaceutical industry, doctors and consumer groups are often created with the intent of raising the public awareness of undiagnosed and undertreated problems. But in the process, these alliances also promote the view that health problems are widespread, serious, but medically treatable. As a communication vehicle for disease awareness in itself, DTCA plays an integral part in this process. Moynihan et al. (2002) contend that health campaigns are commonly linked to companies’ marketing strategies that aim to expand the market for new pharmaceutical products. Alternative approaches, such as the self-limiting or relative benign natural history of a problem, or the importance of personal coping strategies—are played down or ignored. “To tell us about a disease and then to imply that there is a high likelihood that we have it ... is to gnaw away at our self-confidence” (Payer 1992, p. 6).

Medicalization

Such concerns are not new and serve to illustrate the way in which medicine operates as a powerful institutional tool for social control. This is a central thesis of the current paper, where it is alleged that DTCA is yet another means of communication that furthers the medicalization of society. The medicalization critique was one of the most dominant perspectives in the sociology of health and illness in the 1970s and it still remains a dominant approach as evidenced by recent articles within the *British Medical Journal* (for example see Mintzes 2002; Moynihan et al. 2002). Rather than improving people’s health, Illich (1975) argued that contemporary scientific medicine actually undermined it, both through ‘iatrogenesis’ side-effects caused by doctors, and by diminishing people’s capacity for autonomy in dealing with their own health care. Medicalization then, can be described as the definition of a problem in medical terms, the use of medical language to describe a problem, the adoption of a medical framework to understand a problem, or using a medical intervention to ‘treat’ such a problem (Conrad 1992). It should be clear that DTCA promotes the medicalization of society on all four counts. Within Western society a medicalized view that privileges medical technology and intervention benefits the pharmaceutical industry as a whole, but other beneficiaries include insurance agents and the media, as well as health professionals such as physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, and therapists. As consumers, we are constantly urged to conduct our private lives in order to avoid potential disease or early death. DTCA encourages us to take stock of our lives, to

question our appearance and the way we function, and to make certain choices in terms of the way we choose to live.

The pharmaceutical industry and other advocates of DTCA propose that through DTCA, people become more informed about medical matters, and that the information provided enables greater freedom of choice and consumer empowerment through health education. Ironically, critics of medicalization also emphasise freedom of choice and consumer empowerment through health education, where patients as consumers are urged to take control of their health and to challenge the decisions and knowledge of health professionals. But encouraging individuals to be more active in acquiring medical knowledge and urging participation in preventative health activities, actually adds to the medicalization process. Paradoxically, making people more aware moves medical and health concerns even more into our everyday lives and we become even more dependent on contemporary scientific medicine (Lupton 1997).

An example of DTCA: Xenical as a medical solution for obesity.

For many obese people, the launch of Xenical (orlistat) by Hoffman-La Roche/Roche Pharmaceuticals was seen as a ‘magic bullet’ for the treatment of obesity. As an anti-obesity drug, Xenical inhibits the action of pancreatic lipase thereby reducing fat absorption (Ballinger & Peikin 2002). Hoffman-La Roche spent over \$75 million promoting Xenical to consumers in the United States (Lexchin 2001) where the DTCA campaign began in 1999. In New Zealand, the DTCA campaign began in 1998 and was one of the first DTCA campaigns for a prescription drug to be launched in the country.

The decision to use DTCA for Xenical in New Zealand was based upon research suggesting that patients/consumers were unlikely to discuss weight loss with their doctor and that doctors were reluctant to initiate treatment for potential patients (Purdom 2002). From the pharmaceutical industry’s perspective then, DTCA for Xenical was justified and fits within the definition provided at the beginning of this paper: to inform potential consumers of the health risks associated with being obese/overweight, and encourage discussion with a doctor. Ryan & Carryer (2000 p. 34) suggest that the DTCA campaign for Xenical in New Zealand was also “designed to link both social and health outcomes to body size by depicting large-bodied people as unhappy, socially maladjusted and in need of assistance.” DTCA for Xenical positioned obesity as a medical and social problem for which Xenical was offered as a medical solution.

The timing of the worldwide launch for Xenical was ideally suited to the growing concern among the medical and health professions of the increasing prevalence of obesity/overweight worldwide. In the *British Medical Journal*, an article headed “Fat is a medical issue” (Ferriman 1999) reported that The Royal College of Physicians favored using drugs to combat obesity in certain circumstances. Ferriman (1999) cites a report by the College (Royal College Of Physicians of London 1999) on the increasing prevalence of obesity as a “serious medical issue rather than a perversity of current fashion.” This same report maintains that the rise in prevalence is due primarily to environmental and lifestyle factors (Ferriman 1999).

Within the last few years, medical journals (along with the media in general) have been proclaiming obesity as a chronic disorder and an increasingly serious health problem worldwide (Noel & Pugh 2002) that has reached epidemic proportions globally (*The Asia-Pacific perspective: Redefining obesity and its treatment* 2000). Manson & Bassuk (2003) report that obesity has become pandemic in the United States, where currently 2 in 3 US adults are

classified as overweight or obese. Obesity is a risk factor for a vast (and expensive) range of illnesses/diseases including hypertension, diabetes, degenerative arthritis and myocardial infarction (Jeffcoate 1998). Indeed, Jeffcoate (1998, p. 903) states that "obesity should be regarded as a disease" in its own right. To this end, various health professions within the medical community have successfully negotiated a disease designation for obesity that is listed in the *International Classifications of Diseases* (ICD-9-CM 1990) (Sobal 1995).

The perception that one is overweight is a highly aversive state, particularly for women (DeJong & Kleck 1986). Consumer culture promotes slimness, and slimness has become associated with health. Askegaard, Jensen, & Holt (1999, p. 331) suggest that modern societies are 'lipophobic' (scared of fat) and that the slogan "Fat is bad" has become one of the most widespread and commonly recognized dogmas of our daily consumer lives in the course of the 20th century." Health promotion messages warning of the health risks associated with being obese/overweight have become absorbed into our conventional wisdom (Featherstone 1991), and the DTCA campaign for Xenical was based upon these same discourses.

Xenical (along with Viagra) has been labeled a lifestyle drug in the popular imagination (Gilbert et al. 2000). Importantly, the use of the label 'lifestyle drug' is not meant to trivialize the serious medical conditions that are associated with obesity (Gilbert et al. 2000). Instead, the term lifestyle drug is meant to convey the idea that such a drug could be regarded as an issue of personal choice rather than illness. DTCA for Xenical illustrates the arguments that are central to this paper, namely that DTCA is built on the premise that the individual is responsible for protecting herself/himself from risk and that individuals should make appropriate lifestyle choices as a result.

Obesity can be described in terms of biological phenomena (for example as genetic deviance or endocrinological disturbance), but importantly, to medicalize obesity, fatness has had to be designated and officially recognized as a disease (Sobal 1995). As already discussed, various health professions within the medical community have successfully negotiated a disease designation for obesity. Disease status adds legitimacy to DTCA of drugs (such as Xenical) purporting to treat obesity. DTCA for Xenical promotes a medical solution to the medical problem of obesity. Importantly, competing medical perspectives are ignored. For example, as Lewis (1997) asks, should obesity be treated at all? Some researchers believe that the direct medical risks associated with obesity have been overstated (Ernsberger & Koletsky 1999); and Miller (1999), suggests that we need to question the notion that thinness necessarily equals health and fitness.

The example of DTCA for Xenical provides a useful introduction to sociological perspectives that relate to studies of the body, medical sociology, the socially constructed nature of disease and the role of medicine in regulating individuals through the regulation of their bodies. Discussion now turns to the way in which DTCA is premised on discourses of risk and the responsibility of one's health, medicine as a new religion, and the body as a focus of disciplinary power. In conclusion, it is argued that DTCA is primarily a communication vehicle for shaping people's behaviour.

Risk and self-responsibility for health

A number of authors (Beck 1992; Giddens 1990) have suggested that we live in a society characterized by the 'politics of anxiety' (Turner 1991). This anxiety relates to the concept of risk—now a common theme in news media headlines and increasingly the subject of health promotion campaigns (Lupton 1999), and as argued here, a prevalent theme within DTCA campaigns. Beck and

Giddens suggest that the risks of modern-day living are products of social organization and decision-making. Armstrong (1993) contrasts the health risks of today against the health risks of the nineteenth century, suggesting that the environmental factors that impact on present day health are a consequence of human actions. As a result, Armstrong (1993) argues that we now live under a new form of governance, one that is outside the walls of the hospital and beyond the doctor/patient relationship. This new form of governance includes a whole range of agencies dispersed throughout society that require the individual to extend his/her concerns 'with body boundaries' and 'individual psychology' to 'lifestyle' more generally (Armstrong 1993). Bunton & Burrows (1995) describe the contemporary citizen as someone who is increasingly faced with the responsibility of maintaining and improving her/his own health via the recommendations of 'experts' and 'advisors' from a diverse range of institutional and cultural sites, and DTCA can be seen as one further means of communicating this form of governance.

These changes have meant a transformation in health care, described by Nettleton (1995) as a new paradigm. The focus is no longer on 'dangerousness' but instead 'risk' (Castel 1991). According to Castel (1991), health professionals once erred on the side of caution to prevent any manifestation of disease and patients deemed ill were treated as potentially 'dangerous'. But there has been a shift away from the *symptoms* of individuals to their aggregated *characteristics* (age, weight, social class, gender, lifestyles and so on). The new targets for medical care are risk factors that are in turn reflected within the discourses of health promotion and prevention and as argued here, these same discourses underlie DTCA, as evidenced by the campaign for Xenical already described.

Medical sociologists propose the term 'healthism' as the idea that one's health is the enterprise of oneself (Greco 1993, p. 357). Healthism suggests that the individual has a choice in preserving his or her physical capacity from the event of disease (Petersen 1997). Increasingly, we are living in a healthist society that is associated with commercialization, commodification and consumption of health and healthy lifestyles (Nettleton 1995), and the failure of the individual to regulate his/her lifestyle and modify her/his risky behavior becomes, at least in part, "a failure of the self to take care of itself" (Greco 1993, p. 361). A woman is able to communicate to those in power that she is managing herself when she is able to gain control over her body and shrink in size (Sault 1994). To have a healthy body is "the mark of distinction that differentiates those who deserve to succeed from those who will fail" (Crawford 1994, p. 1354). Importantly, the terms 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' are now synonymous with being normal and abnormal. Individuals whose behavior is at variance with the pursuit of a 'risk-free' existence are likely to be seen, and to see themselves, as lacking self-control, and "not fulfilling their duties as fully autonomous, responsible citizens" (Petersen 1997). Provocatively, Skrabanek (1994, p.17) likens the concept of healthism to religion:

Healthism is a powerful ideology, since in secular societies, it fills the vacuum left by religion. As an ersatz religion it has wide appeal, especially among the middle classes who have lost their links with traditional culture and feel increasingly insecure in a rapidly changing world. Healthism is embraced eagerly as a path to surrogate salvation. If death is to be the final full stop, perhaps the inevitable can be indefinitely postponed. Since disease may lead to death, disease itself must be prevented by propitiatory rituals. The righteous will be saved and the wicked shall die.

Medicine as a new religion

Although provocative, the comparison made by Skrabanek (1994) between healthism and religion should not be so surprising. Many writers have acknowledged the trend for religion to give way to science, where the scientist has taken over the role of priest and where a process of secularization has become a feature of modern western society (Fitzpatrick 2001). As cited by Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry (1989, p. 12), Miner (1956) “pointed out that contemporary body care rituals regard the bathroom as a shrine, the medicine cabinet as a treasure chest of magical potions, and doctors and pharmacists as priests.”

In the early 1970s, the American sociologist Irving Zola (1972, p. 487) argued that medicine was becoming a major institution of social control, ‘nudging aside, if not incorporating, the more traditional institutions of religion and law’ (see also Freidson 1970). Echoing Zola’s sentiment, Lupton (1999) goes even further and contends that medicine and public health have replaced religion as the central institutions governing the conduct of human bodies. Turner (1992) suggests that the growing importance of preventative medicine and the concept of lifestyle as a form of social self-control means that in areas of family life, the local GP has replaced, at least in functional terms, the confessor and the priest. Diet and lifestyle choices, according to Lupton (1999), can be seen as viable alternatives to prayer and righteous living and provide a means of making sense of life and death where ‘healthiness’ has replaced ‘Godliness’ as the yardstick of what can be considered right. As the surveillance of the village and church has declined, the individual has been increasingly expected to scrutinize him/herself, and “self-policing becomes an expected behavioral practice” (Crawford 1994, p. 1359). The increased emphasis on the aesthetic quality of the body in relation to consumerism promotes virtues such as thinness and self-regulation in the interests of looking good (Turner 1992), and the DTCA campaign for Xenical becomes an example of this process.

Even though people in Western society live longer and healthier lives than ever before, we are increasingly preoccupied by our health. As evidenced by the increased prevalence of obesity, our modern Western diet and lifestyle are seen as being distinctly unhealthy and as major contributors to the contemporary epidemics of cancer, heart disease and strokes. The DTCA campaign for Xenical illustrates the manner in which the *body* can be used as a site of control for individual conduct (Joy & Venkatesh 1994), and where the body has become a focus for disciplinary power. As suggested by Meamber & Venkatesh (1999, p. 190) “It is through the use of the body as a symbol that societies come to create the mechanisms which control.”

The body as focus for disciplinary power: surveillance medicine

Of particular relevance within the present research context is the work of Foucault (1926-84). Foucault’s work has become widely used and quoted within sociological analyses of health care (Symonds 1998). The body was of major significance in Foucault’s work, and his unique perspective on the body as a focus for disciplinary power and control served to recast thinking about the nature of the body and about the operations of power in modern societies (Turner 1997).

Foucault was interested in the forms of governance involved in the investigation and regulation of the body of the individual and bodies of populations (Nettleton & Bunton 1995). Foucault described a system of control and surveillance which emanated from Jeremy Bentham’s notion of the Panopticon, a system which involved maximum supervision with minimum effort (Armstrong

1983; Foucault 1980), (for a description of the Panopticon concept, see Thompson & Hirschman 1995). The analogy of the Panopticon is useful in describing how people come to govern themselves through regulatory processes. Governance in this sense relates to disciplinary power that is manifested through a relationship of observations, where individuals, knowing they are under surveillance, transform their actions and their identities (Armstrong 1987). The Panopticon’s potential for surveillance nurtures self-discipline by causing individuals to ‘gaze upon themselves’ (Eckermann 1997).

Within medicine, epidemiology, statistical techniques for aggregating social data, clinical medicine and the application of science to the social sphere means that bodies can be transformed into ‘objects’ where ‘self-surveillance emerges as a practice of control’ (Eckermann 1997, p.157). Armstrong (1987, p. 70) discusses the parallels between medical and Panoptic power: “The prisoner in the Panopticon and the patient at the end of the stethoscope both remain silent as the techniques of surveillance sweep over them.”

Medical power is a particular form of influence that is closely associated with perspectives of the body, especially in terms of the discipline of the body and body control. Medicine (along with law and religion) was described by Foucault as being an institution of normative coercion (see Turner 1992) because of its ability to discipline individuals and exercise forms of surveillance over everyday life so that actions are both produced and constrained (Turner 1997). Medicine as an institution does not need to be coercive in a violent or authoritarian sense because the institution of medicine is accepted as legitimate and normative at the everyday level, where it exercises a moral authority over the individual by explaining individual ‘problems’ and providing solutions for them (Turner 1997). As a communication vehicle for the institution of medicine, DTCA operates within this same moral discourse, where individual medical problems are portrayed as having medical solutions.

DTCA: obliged to be healthy

DTCA, under the rubric of public health and promotion, is a vehicle for shaping people’s behavior. Minimal justification is needed for such efforts because they are in the interests of our health. Rather than being subjected to overt punishments for being obese/overweight, we tend to largely self-police ourselves. Individuals not conforming to ‘health messages’ expose themselves to the mechanisms of self-surveillance, evoking feelings of guilt, anxiety and repulsion towards the self, as well as the admonitions of those close to them for ‘letting themselves go’ or inviting illness (Lupton 1999; Thompson & Hirschman 1995). Self-scrutiny is a constituent of modern, individual autonomy and freedom where self-policing is an expected behavioral practice (Crawford 1994). Nikolas Rose (1990) usefully articulated the conceptualization of ‘the self’, which in turn, he argues, is inseparable from modern forms of ‘government’. According to Rose (1990), consumption requires individuals to make a choice from a number of products in response to a repertoire of wants that are shaped and legitimated by advertising and promotion, but which must be experienced and justified as personal desires. Every aspect of life, according to Rose, is like every commodity, “imbued with a self-referential meaning; every choice we make is an emblem of our identity, a mark of our individuality, each is a message to ourselves and others as to the sort of person we are, each casts a glow back, illuminating the self of he or she who consumes” (Rose 1990, p. 227).

For Rose, the self is not just enabled to choose, but *obliged* to construe a life in terms of the choices, powers, and values available:

“Individuals are expected to construe the course of their life as the outcome of such choices, and to account for their lives in terms of the reasons for those choices” (Rose 1990, p. 227). Importantly then, this paper has argued that DTCA should not be seen as a practice that overtly seeks to constrain individuals’ freedom of action, but rather DTCA invites individuals *voluntarily* to conform to their own objectives, to discipline themselves, to turn the gaze upon themselves in the interests of their health. In doing so, DTCA offers medical solutions for medical problems and in return, we as consumers are obliged to choose from a repertoire of solutions according to our lifestyle needs and wishes.

Future Research

Within this paper, DTCA discussion is focused at the macro-level, where it is argued that DTCA contributes to the medicalization of health and lifestyle choice. Future research will analyze DTCA at the micro-level by deconstructing a series of three advertisements used for the promotion of Xenical to potential consumers. While the construction of message content within advertisements must be seen within the wider context of the cultural, political and historical perspectives from which it originates, a micro-level analysis of DTCA for Xenical will examine advertising meaning from three perspectives. Based upon interviews with the advertising agency/marketing manager of the campaign, advertising meanings will be analyzed from the perspective of the ‘producer/author’; advertising meanings will also be analyzed from the perspective of the ‘consumer/receiver’, based upon interviews with people who perceive themselves to be overweight/obese; and finally, advertising meanings will be examined from an ‘analyst/ interpreters’ perspective through a process of advertising deconstruction and discourse analysis.

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Consumer Complaint Behavior: Do “Other Customers” Make a Difference?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

A possible neglected area in the consumer complaint behavior (CCB) area is the potential effect of other customers on an individual's complaint behavior. More specifically, it is possible that the mere presence of and/or interaction with acquainted or unacquainted others at the time of service failure may influence consumers' complaint decision-making processes and, ultimately, their complaint behavior. Although no known research has directly investigated this issue, there is evidence to suggest such a proposition. For example, the importance of social significance in consumer satisfaction was mentioned by Day (1977). Folkes (1984) also acknowledged the possible influence of others' presence on consumer reactions to product failure.

The objective of this study is to determine whether there may be effects of the presence of other customers in a complaint behavior setting with a focus on both acquainted and unacquainted customers. This exploratory study examines CCB from a social-psychological perspective. In addition to precepts from CCB literature, the present investigation utilizes the interpersonal influence literature (McGrath and Otnes 1995) and theory of social facilitation effects (Zajonc 1965) as a framework.

Literature Review

Interpersonal Influence

The importance of social influence has been addressed in the field of consumer behavior with the focus on interpersonal influence from *acquainted* consumers, such as family and peers. Researchers have also recognized interpersonal influence from *unacquainted* consumers (e.g., McGrath and Otnes 1995). McGrath and Otnes (1995) studied stranger interaction in the retail setting and concluded that interactions among unacquainted consumers can either help or hamper shopping experiences in various manners.

Social Facilitation Effects

Social facilitation theory recognizes the importance of social environment on individuals' behavior. According to Zajonc (1965), theoretical tenets predict that the mere presence of others affects individual behavior and performance. Empirical research in retailing found that the presence of others extends the length of stay and, thus, increases purchases (Sommer and Sommer 1989). Therefore, this study proposes that the presence of other customers influences consumers' complaint behavior.

Method

Undergraduate students majoring in business-related programs were recruited to participate in the study and required to recall past experiences regarding complaint behavior, including the situations and possible factors that encouraged and/or discouraged their decisions to make complaints. More specific questions were posed to ensure sufficient information regarding the role of others in a complaint behavior setting would be obtained.

A total of 97 respondents were recruited, resulting in 97 incidents. Of the 97 incidents, 34 were in the context of restaurants, 20 in airlines, 11 in phone services, 13 in retail services, and the balance in automobile rental, hotel, and other service industries. Of the total sample, 27 respondents were dropped from further analysis due to the fact that no relevant information regarding other customer(s) was mentioned, culminating in 70 usable incidents.

Data collection and analysis was based on critical incident technique (CIT) and involved several stages. First, each of the researchers carefully read and sorted the incidents into categories. The critical incidents were reviewed for similarities and differences that pertained to the influence of other customer(s) in reported experiences. Second, the researchers compared the results of the initial stage of analysis. Differences in categorical results were discussed until a consensus on categories was achieved. Interjudge agreement on the assignment of incidents into categories was 87%. Third, the researchers labeled categories through further discussion.

Findings, Conclusions, and Limitations

Two major categories emerged from this study. The first category, *Acquainted Customers*, consists of three subcategories: (1) Encouragement/Confidence/Support, (2) Embarrassment Avoidance, and (3) Obligation. The second category, *Unacquainted Customers*, encompasses eight subcategories: (1) Confidence/Support, (2) Embarrassment Avoidance, (3) Altruism, (4) Problem Awareness through Service Comparison, (5) Leadership, (6) Diffusion of Responsibility, (7) Accessibility, and (8) Revenge.

One of the major findings is that the mere presence of other customers appears to have an impact on consumers' decisions to complain. Specifically, the presence of other customers, acquainted and unacquainted, either encourages the consumer to voice the complaint (e.g., obligation or altruism) or deter complaint actions from occurring (e.g., embarrassment avoidance).

Regarding the influence of acquainted customers, this study reveals that close relationships with and/or concerns about acquaintances may provide strong triggers to complaining behavior. However, under similar circumstances related to relationships and concerns, it may be that acquaintances of those individuals who wish to avoid the spotlight may have the effect of dampening the tendency to complain. In terms of the influence from unacquainted customers, the results suggest that these strangers may characterize more types of influences than acquainted customers. A consumer may complain in the presence of unacquainted customers out of concern for their welfare or to hurt the service provider's business by raising surrounding customers' awareness of poor service received.

Although the focus of this research was on other customers who are present at the time of service failure, this study found that both acquainted and unacquainted customers not present at the time of service failure may also have an impact on consumers' decisions to complain. Therefore, further research is warranted to explore the influences of other customers who are not physically present.

Several limitations of this study should be stated. First, the researchers asked directly how the presence of other customers may have affected the subject's complaint decision process. Although not every participant acknowledged the influence of other customers, a potential demand effect may have occurred. Second, this research employed modified CIT based on retrospective reports. Information regarding the subjects' unsatisfying experiences may be underreported due to temporal issues, or overemphasized because of dissatisfaction; recall bias may have occurred. Third, most research studies involved with CIT-collected data are associated with relatively large samples (Gremler 2003); however, this study's sample size was relatively small. The small sample size raises concerns about generalizability of findings, the large number of

construct emergent categories, and frequency counts of the categories. Future work is warranted to determine the representation of this study's results.

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Cultural Determinants of Behavior in Negotiations with Incomplete Information

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Bargaining and negotiation are perhaps the most fundamental of marketing processes through which buyers and sellers establish terms of exchange. Bargaining is a key aspect in organizational and consumer purchases. However, much of the existing bargaining literature consists largely of experimental simulations investigating theoretical frameworks developed using evidence from Western cultures, predominantly the United States (cf. Graham et al. 1988). Relatively little is known about the generalizability of these theoretical frameworks across diverse cultures. The cultural psychology literature, for example, highlights the differential influence of cultural orientation on persuasion processes (e.g., Aaker and Maheswaran 1997), decision making (e.g., Briley, Morris, and Simonson 2000), causal attributions (e.g., Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan 1999), and individual characteristics (e.g., Triandis 1995). Despite the practical impetus and the growing theoretical interest in cultural psychology, relatively little work examines the effect of cultural orientation on bargaining processes and outcomes.

The main purpose of this research is to examine the role of cultural orientation in bargaining. The general premise of this research, following the recent literature in cultural psychology, is that many judgments and decisions are the result of cognitive processes that are culturally imposed (e.g., Briley et al. 2000). The rationale is that exposure to different ecological factors and social structures perpetuates different cultural values and ideals and thus certain judgment "biases" are likely to be more prevalent in one culture than another (e.g., Triandis 1995). More specifically, this research examines how differences in cultural orientation influence bargainers' causal attributions and inferences and thereby the bargaining outcomes in an incomplete information situation. While much of the existing consumer behavior literature on bargaining focuses on complete information situations where bargainers have full information about one another's payoffs (Buchan et al. 2004; Corfman and Lehman 1993), actual bargaining is unlikely to conform to situations where bargainers have access to objective referents and standards against which to judge potential bargaining outcomes (Eliashberg et al. 1986; White and Neale 1994). Importantly, in incomplete information situations, bargainers may search for causal explanations for an opponent's behavior (Morris, Larrick, and Su 1999). The nature of causal attributions may differ based on a bargainer's cultural orientation thereby affecting bargaining processes and outcomes (e.g., Morris and Peng 1994).

In this research, we demonstrate in three experiments that bargainers from Western cultures have a tendency to seek causal explanations for an opponent's behavior in terms of individual personality traits. In contrast, bargainers from Eastern cultures are more likely to recognize that an opponent's behavior may be dictated by situational factors. The experiments use ultimatum bargaining as the setting to study the role of cultural orientation (e.g., Buchan et al. 2004). We run one-sided incomplete information ultimatum bargaining games simultaneously in western United States and Seoul (Korea) as the setting to study these research questions. All subjects played the role of Responder. Proposer's offers were part of the stimuli and included two values: a relatively low value and a relatively high value. Questionnaires were back translated and offer sizes were adjusted in terms of currency and purchase parity. Experimenters in both countries were trained to reduce procedural disparities.

Experiment 1 showed that in an incomplete information setting, there was no difference in bargaining outcomes across Western and East Asian cultures as bargainers from both U. S. and Korean were equally likely to attribute a low offer to opponent's personality traits. However, when situational constraints were made salient, Korean bargainers were more sensitive to the situational determinants of observed behavior relative to U. S. bargainers and were, thus, more willing to accept a low offer. Consistent with earlier work (e.g., Choi and Nisbett 1998), our results suggest that East Asian cultures are more likely to correct for the overattribution bias when situational constraints are made salient. In other words, when there is no accessible information to discount the personality trait attributions, both Western and East Asian cultures are prone to the overattribution bias. These results also suggest that cultures perhaps differ in their implicit theories of the influence of external situational constraints rather than in their implicit theories of personality dispositions (Chiu et al. 2000; Krull et al. 1999).

Based on the assumption that the group is a natural unit of agency for East Asians and the individual is the unit of agency for Western cultures (Choi et al. 1999; Menon et al. 1999), experiment 2 shows that Korean bargainers are more sensitive to the potential group influence in affecting an opponent's behavior. Specifically, while there was no difference in bargaining outcomes between U. S. and Korean bargainers in an individual decision context, Korean bargainers were more likely to accept low offers when the proposer was supposedly making the decision in a group context. It is important to note that groups occupy the physical space surrounding individual actors and, in some cases, can be considered merely an additional situational constraint (Menon et al. 1999). However, groups may also be more than just a passive non-social situational constraint. Rather, the group may be perceived as a social entity that can direct action. As with individual dispositions, groups may also be perceived as possessing unique dispositions (Higgins and Bryant 1982). While our findings support the idea that cultures differ in their sensitivity to group influence, future research should expand the inquiry of groups to include specific dispositional attributions and inferences. In addition to experiment 1 and 2, experiment 3 unambiguously shows that differences in causal attributions mediate the influence of cultural orientation on bargaining outcomes.

Together, the results indicate that culture does not have a perennial influence on judgment and decision making in general and bargaining in particular. Rather, there are certain conditions under which cultural differences are manifested supporting the more recent, dynamic view of the influence of cultural orientation (Briley et al. 2000; Choi and Nisbett 1998). In our context, penalization of apparent competitive (or unfair) intent seems to be a universal phenomenon as bargainers from both U. S. and Korea exhibit the overattribution bias. However, when there is accessible information that can be used to discount the personality based attributions, cultural difference emerge. In particular, Korean bargainers are more likely to recognize and acknowledge alternative reasons for observed behavior, which tend to correct the initial tendency to seek causal explanations in terms of personality dispositions (e.g., Choi and Nisbett 1998).

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Beyond Polarized Cultural Values

A New Approach to the Study of South Korean and US Newspaper Advertisements

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ABSTRACT

This study content-analyzed US and South Korean newspaper ads for the year 2000, to challenge bipolarized cultural value frameworks prevalent in cross-cultural advertising studies and to establish more rigorous methodology. Our multi-group confirmatory factor analysis showed that the two-factor model of individualism/collectivism dimension was not equivalent across the two cultures, while the future/past time orientation dimension was comparable. As predicted, both Korean and US ads conveyed more individualistic than collectivistic indicators. In addition, Korean ads were more future-time oriented than the US ads. Findings are discussed in terms of theoretical, methodological and socio-cultural considerations.

"The right relationship is everything"—CHASE bank slogan (US)

"Investment for future"—CHEIL bank slogan (S. Korea)

Polarized views of cultures and values dominate advertising and consumer behavior literature, particularly comparisons of US and East Asian cultural frames (see Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun, and Kropp 1999; Moon and Franke 2000). On the whole, these studies are based on the assumptions that: (1) There are clear distinctions between Eastern versus Western cultural values; (2) cultural values are mutually exclusive and bipolar; and (3) the cultural dimensions constructed with multiple cultural indicators are equivalent across the compared cultures. But what if Eastern and Western cultures share values—or if indigenously individualist nations promote collectivist values like the US bank slogan above? Most cross-cultural advertising research examines cultural values reflected in advertisements, using a bipolar cultural typology such as Hofstede's (1980, 1991) individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance, or the cultural distinction of time orientation (e.g., Albers-Miller and Gelb 1996; Cho et al. 1999; Tak, Kaid, and Lee 1997). Although these studies have usually hypothesized that ads in Western cultures (e.g., the US) hold more individualistic and future-oriented value indicators and those in Eastern cultures (e.g., China, Japan, South Korea) employ more collectivistic and traditional value indicators, their results do not always follow their predictions.

Inconsistent results across content-analytic studies may reveal problems inherent in their assumptions or/and methodology. For instance, most cross-cultural studies examining Western versus Eastern ads do not take into consideration the fact that advertising—whether it is Western or Eastern—is a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional cultural by-product that reflects socio-economic and political changes, as well as corresponding value changes (Pollay 1986). While Hofstede's typology provides a parsimonious layout for the comparison of cultural values, the typology was based upon surveys of international IBM employees in the late 1960s. Due to globalization forces in media, marketing, and economics in past decades, new examinations of culture and advertising are needed. In fact, recently researchers have questioned the bipolar theoretical assumptions about the individualism and collectivism dimension (Oyserman, Coon, and Kimmelmeier 2002) and about traditional views of advertising in Eastern cultures (Zhang and Shavitt 2003).

Another potential shortcoming of previous cross-cultural advertising studies pertains to a certain lack of methodological rigor. One of the primary methodological issues in cross-cultural research is to establish comparability in the compared cultures (Van de Vijver and Leung 1997). In cross-cultural advertising research, for instance, the individualism/collectivism dimension has been assumed rather than tested based on certain cultural indicators set from previous studies. Such assumptions could cause a bias that eventually threatens the validity of the cross-cultural comparison (see Van de Vijver and Leung 1997, for detailed cross-cultural methodological issues).

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to contribute to the cross-cultural advertising literature in two ways. First, we challenge assumptions that ads in Eastern versus Western cultures today will carry distinctly polarized values by considering social and value changes due to globalization forces. Second, we statistically test whether the accepted cultural factors that have been used previously for Eastern versus Western cultures are equivalent across the two cultures by adopting an advanced and rigorous statistical method.

In this study, US and South Korean newspaper ads are compared. South Korea (Korea, hereafter) was selected because of its economic importance, as the US' ninth largest import and export market in 1998 (Moon and Franke 2000) and as the world's tenth largest advertising market in 1999 (Ad Age International 1999). With close ties between the two countries, a number of cross-cultural studies between the US and Korea have been conducted including examinations of cultural values reflected in ads (Cho et al. 1999; Han and Shavitt 1994; Tak, Kaid, and Lee 1997), advertising execution styles and appeals (Miracle, Chang, and Taylor 1992), consumer attitudes (Yoon, Muehling, and Cho 1996), and work ethics (Moon and Franke 2000). We add to the knowledge of advertising and values for these two national cultures by examining advertising value content, focusing on one widely used cultural dimension (individualism/collectivism) and one relatively neglected cultural dimension (time orientation).

Why Examine Advertising and Cultural Values?

Cultural values, the deepest manifestations and expressions of culture and collective mental programming (Hofstede 1980), are thought to be relatively stable features of individuals and societies and correspond to personality and cultural characteristics (Triandis 1995). How these cultural values are transferred to the individual might be explained according to social adaptation theory (Kahle 1983), which posits that values form the point of intersection between individuals and society. Essentially, this means that some of culture's values are learned or internalized through socialization processes from family, friends, media, and other cultural influences. Thus, cultural values influence one's personal values. If values lie at the deep structure of personality that influences perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors (Pollay 1987, p.106), then we can learn about cultures and individual consumers within those cultures by understanding their media and ads. Indeed, advertising influences and reflects cultural and personal values so that messages are more readily accepted by and more persuasive to the consumers within a given culture (Albers-Miller and Stafford 1999; Tse, Belk, and Zhou 1989).

Individualism/Collectivism (I/C, hereafter)

I/C is the most well known and widely studied construct of cultural values used mainly to understand differences between Western and Eastern cultures (Oyserman et al. 2002). I/C can be defined as “people taking care of themselves and their immediate family only in a loosely knit social structure, versus people belonging to in-groups to look after them in a tightly knit social organization” (Hofstede 1980, p.87). In individualistic cultures, people are “I”-oriented and self-accomplishment is important. In collectivistic cultures, people are “we”-oriented and their identity is based on the society and groups in which they belong (Cha 1994). Advertisements in individualistic cultures appeal more to individuality, self-reliance, success and self-benefit, while ads in collectivistic cultures typically relate to group belonging, benefits to others, harmony with others, and group fulfillment (Cho et al. 1999; Han and Shavitt 1994; Miracle et al. 1992; Mueller 1987).

Although cultural theories might predict that the advertising of Western countries reflects individualism and that of Eastern countries reflects collectivism, studies have shown inconsistent results. For instance, Han and Shavitt (1994) found that magazine ads in the US employed more individual benefits, self-accomplishment, and independence than those in Korea, while Korean ads emphasized group benefits, harmony, and family integrity to a greater extent than did US ads. In contrast, Cho et al. (1999) found that Korean television commercials did not employ collectivistic appeals more frequently than individualistic appeals. Meanwhile, some studies highlight changes reflected in advertising in a given culture (Cheng and Schweitzer 1996; Zhang and Shavitt 2003). Zhang and Shavitt (2003) found that Chinese ads (especially those in magazine ads targeting generation Xers) actually reflected modernity and individualism values rather than traditional, collectivist values.

This body of research suggests ads in Eastern versus Western cultures may not solely reflect the polarized indigenous cultural values as currently conceptualized, and that individuals within those cultures may not prefer ads conveying those indigenous values. Shavitt, Nelson, and Yuan (1997) found both American and Taiwanese subjects preferred collectivistic to individualistic appeals. These results are inconsistent with the finding of Han and Shavitt (1994) that U.S. subjects in their experiment were more persuaded by individualistic benefits, while Korean subjects preferred collectivistic appeals.

Perhaps I/C is not a polarized construct but may represent dynamic and multi-faceted values (Triandis 1993), such that all individuals contain elements of individualism or collectivism, but they differ with regard to ‘how often’ or ‘under what circumstances’ they rely on particular values (Triandis 1995). According to Triandis (1995), individualistic values are a consequence of cultural complexity and heterogeneity, affluence, and social and geographic mobility. In the context of Korea, the country experienced drastic socioeconomic changes in a short time period, including a foreign money crisis that attacked Asian countries in 1998 (i.e., the “IMF event,” see Paek, Nelson, and McLeod 2002; Shim and Cho 2000 for more detailed discussion). Such unexpected economic hardship and corresponding social mobility changed consumers’ values as well as specific lifestyles (Shim and Cho 2000). Korean society has faced a tidal entry of multinational media such as Cosmopolitan and MTV, global advertising agencies, foreign retailers and business practitioners. During this period, multinational advertising agencies recorded an increase in market share from 4% in 1996 to 37.5% in 2000, explosively increasing by 124.2% from a 169.1% increase in 1999 (Lee, 2001). Advertising, as a very-sensitive trendsetter and value indicator, may reflect such social changes, reflecting more individualistic and westernized values in Korea.

Past and Future Time Orientation (P/F, hereafter)

A second cultural dimension that can be examined within the context of Eastern versus Western culture is that of time orientation. Time orientation has been defined in various ways distinguishing East and West including long-time versus short-time orientation (Chinese Culture Connection 1987) and monochronic versus polychronic time orientation (Hall 1976). These conceptions share a couple of common ideas: (1) time orientation is conceptualized as looking toward the past, present, or future (Hall 1976); and (2) people from East Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Korea tend to be past-oriented, and Westerners such as Americans and Northern Europeans show more of a future-time orientation (de Mooij 1998). As a product of a culture, though, time orientation has received little attention in the content analysis of cross-cultural advertising with a few exceptions (e.g., Cho et al. 1999; Ko and Gentry 1991; McCarty and Hattwick 1992).

While the time orientation dimension needs more work for a clear scale construct (Ko and Gentry 1991), the scale used in previous studies suggests that a past-time orientation emphasizes tradition, history, past accomplishments, and maintenance of the past; future orientations place more value on plans for tomorrow (Cho et al. 1999). Usually youth are likely to appear as models, and copy such as “future generations,” “new and innovative,” “improvement,” and “progress” is used in ads (Cho et al. 1999).

Hypotheses and Research Questions

We operationalize the I/C and P/F dimensions based on the previous studies (see Table 1 below). Rather than assume that the two cultural dimensions will be comparable across the two cultures, however, we start with the following research question to test statistically for equivalence of the cultural dimensions across the two cultures:

RQ1: Do US and Korean ads share a common factor structure that can be constructed by the given cultural indicators?

One rationale for the disconnection between cultural expectations and advertising content findings may lie in the argument put forth by McCarty (1994), who argued that advertising, particularly in developing societies, might not reflect current value orientations but the orientations of a society that the culture is progressing toward. As cultures progress, they tend to become more individualistic and future-oriented (Triandis 1995). This argument is consistent with Mueller (1987), who proposed that cultural values mirrored in developing countries’ advertising may not be the indigenous ones that the culture holds, but the ones in the same direction as the culture is evolving toward.

Given seemingly inconsistent findings of previous cross-cultural studies that have examined the I/C and P/F cultural dimensions, and allowing for the possibility of changes in social values, we hypothesize that Korean ads will actually employ more future-oriented and individualistic cultural values than past-oriented and collectivistic cultural values. We hypothesize the same value dimensions and directions for the US ads. Thus, the following hypotheses will be tested:

- H1a: Korean ads will have more individualistic than collectivistic indicators.
- H1b: US ads will have more individualistic than collectivistic indicators.
- H2a: Korean ads will have more future-oriented than past-oriented indicators.
- H2b: US ads will have more future-oriented than past-oriented indicators.

Following McCarty's argument (1994), ads in such a developing and drastically changing society as Korea might be even more individualistic and future time-oriented than those in the US, but there is no rigorous theoretical background and literature supporting this argument. Thus, the following research questions are addressed:

RQ2: Which country's ads employ more individualistic indicators?

RQ3: Which country's ads employ more future-oriented indicators?

METHOD

Content analysis was used to compare cultural value differences in US and Korean newspaper advertising. Newspaper advertisements were chosen because they are relatively comparable and generalizable for all target segments due to the vast differences in media environment, but are rarely used much in cross-cultural advertising studies.

Sampling. Advertisements in Chosun-ilbo (Korea) and the New York Times (US) were selected randomly. Both newspapers are relatively well matched (Tak et al. 1997) in that each is arguably the most salient and influential newspaper in each country and has nationwide readership. Based on constructed week sampling, newspapers throughout the year 2000 were collected. Sunday-issued newspaper, duplicate ads, local ads, classified and movie ads were excluded to avoid lack of matching and sampling bias. In addition, international product ads in the Korean newspaper were excluded to focus on the cultural dimensions inherent in each country's ads. As a result, 1262 (638 for Chosun-ilbo; 624 for The New York Times) ads were analyzed.

Coding Procedure. This study developed mutually exclusive, exhaustive and reliable coding categories, based on previous research on I/C and P/F cultural indicators (e.g., Cho et al. 1999; Han and Shavitt 1994; Ko and Gentry 1991).

Two bilingual graduate students coded the ads. Considering the potential for gender differences and cultural biases (Miracle 2001), one female bilingual Korean American who lived in the US for more than 15 years coded the entire data set. The other coder was a Korean male who had just arrived in the US. He coded 170 randomly selected sample ads, which exceeded ten percent criteria (Wimmer and Dominick 1994), to calculate intercoder reliability.

Throughout multiple training sessions, the hypotheses-blind coders worked independently, to examine all elements of the advertising such as headline, subhead, body copy, illustration, caption, and slogan when making coding decisions. After examining the ad in its entirety, the coders were instructed to enter a simple "yes" or "no" to indicate the presence or absence of each cultural value indicator. In the next step, scales were constructed of each cultural dimension as shown in Table 1 below. For the intercoder reliability, this study adopted Krippendorff's alpha, which takes chance agreements into account (Krippendorff 1980). All reliability values of the variables were at or above the conventionally accepted value of .75 (Wimmer and Dominick 1994), ranging from .79 to .98. One item, 'conformity,' with substandard agreement was discarded for the construct of collectivism. Before calculating t-tests, Cronbach's alpha was computed. All items of each cultural dimension were within an acceptable reliability (Nunnally 1978), ranging from .70 to .81.

Measure. Cronbach's alpha warrants internal reliability, but does not guarantee cross-validity for comparing each scale between the two cultures. For RQ1, multi-group confirmatory factor analyses (MGCFAs) were performed to ensure cross-culture comparability of the factor structure. Since all the items have binary values

(yes=1, no=0), in the first step, tetrachoric correlations were performed among the items within each of the cultural dimensions using the PRELIS program (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1996a), to reduce the problem of underestimating the correlations in product-moment correlations. In the second step, MGCFAs were performed using the LISREL program (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1996b). As a prerequisite for a valid comparison across the two cultures, the goal of these analyses was to obtain a common factorial model that could be comparable across ads in the two cultures.

RESULTS

First, a MGCFAs model was conducted to examine the degree to which the two separate two-factor models of cultural value factors (I/C model and P/F model) capture the structure of correlations among the value items and whether the structure remains comparable between the two cultures. The results show that the two-factor model of P/F yields a good fit ($\chi^2(32)=74.47$, $p=.00$; RMSEA=.044, NNFI=.99, and CFI=.99). Since the chi-square test is sensitive to a large sample size, several goodness-of-fit indices are considered together (Kline 1998). The model that allowed the factor loadings to be invariant across the two groups still demonstrates a good fit, implying the time orientation dimension is a very rigorous factor structure that is stable across the two cultures ads. The loadings for the time-orientation factor in which the ads from the two national newspapers share range from .57 to .75 and the total variance accounted for by the model is up to .68 (see Table 2).

While the factor structure for the P/F dimension supported the comparability of the ads across cultures, the two-factor model of I/C failed to produce a good fit. Lack of fit in the model implies that the factor structure of the I/C dimension with the given indicators may not be stable across the ads. Therefore, for the I/C cultural value comparison, we examined each indicator rather than focusing on the overall dimension, when comparing ads in the two cultures.

The first two hypotheses predicted that both Korean and US ads would carry more individualistic than collectivistic indicators. Table 3 shows that these hypotheses were supported, in that Korean ads contained more individualism indicators than collectivism indicators. Likewise, the second hypotheses predicted both Korean and US ads would convey a greater number of future-oriented indicators than past-oriented indicators.

Along with within-culture analyses, the two research questions asked which country's ads would employ more individualistic (RQ2) and future time-oriented cultural indicators (RQ3). Independent samples t-tests were performed, using a Bonferroni-type correction to guard against type 1 error for multiple mean comparisons, which adopts a more stringent alpha level.

To investigate RQ2, each cultural indicator was compared rather than the overall I/C dimension, based on the finding with respect to RQ1 that the factor structure for this dimension was not comparable across the two cultures. As shown in table 4, mean differences between Korean and US ads for each cultural indicator show mixed results.

In the collectivism dimension, Korean ads appealed more to 'relationship/ harmony' cultural item than did US ads. In the individualism dimension, Korean ads focused significantly more on status of the consumer (KO=.84, US=.77, $t_{(1225.9)}=3.33$, $p<.001$), 'self-indulgence' (KO=.26, US=.19, $t_{(1249.5)}=3.09$, $p<.01$), and 'benefits to an individual target audience' (KO=.73, US=.62, $t_{(1245.2)}=3.82$, $p<.001$) cultural indicators than their US counterparts. In contrast, US ads contained a greater number of 'belonging' indicators in the collectivism dimension than did Korean ads, and a greater number of 'self-reliance' items in the individualism dimension than did Korean ads.

TABLE 1
Operationalization of Cultural Dimensions and Indicators

Collectivism: (.81)
1. Appeals about the integrity of or belonging to family or social groups (.90)
2. Emphasis on harmony. Being together. Friendship, partnership, companion. (.87)
3. Sharing, gift-giving (.89)
4. Emphasis on the accomplishments of the family or social group (.86)
5. Emphasis on the benefits to families, group members, or others (.87)
Individualism: (.70)
1. Focus on the individuality or status of the consumer (.97)
2. Uniqueness, creativity, originality. Focusing on being different, or standing out. (.96)
3. Escape or stay out of the current position (.89)
4. Self-indulgence: excessive or unrestrained gratification of one's own appetites, desires, or whims. Enjoyment, fun, pleasure, instinct gratification (.93)
5. Mentioning of ranking, competition, winning, the best and the most (.92)
6. Self-direction or self-reliance. Freedom, choosing own goals, self-esteem (.87)
7. Self-fulfillment or self-development (.84)
8. Self-benefit (.90)
Past-Time Orientation: (.76)
1. Emphasis on being classic, historical, memorable, old, or antique. Worth of age of product itself (.94)
2. Emphasis on accumulated experience or knowledge. Mentioning the companies' history (.91)
3. Respect for tradition, legacy, heritage, elders and ancestors (.87)
Future-Time Orientation: (.81)
1. Emphasis on youth. Challenge, adventure, being new of company or people (.92)
2. Introducing a new product/service or new benefits (.86)
3. Emphasis on the future of being progressive (.98)
4. Focus on positive change such as innovation, development, improvement, and success (.98)

Note: Numbers in the parenthesis of each dimension indicate the alpha reliability
Numbers in the parenthesis of each item indicate the intercoder reliability

TABLE 2
Multi-group Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Time Orientation

Cultural Values	Korean Ads (n=638)	Common metric loadings	The US Ads (n=624)
	R ²		R ²
<i>Past-time orientation</i>			
Antique	.63	.75	.49
Experience	.56	.72	.48
Tradition	.48	.73	.61
<i>Future-time orientation</i>			
Youth	.57	.79	.68
New Product	.29	.59	.44
Future	.42	.61	.33
Change	.37	.57	.29
Global goodness-of-fit indices	$\chi^2(32)=74.47$ ($p=.00$), RMSEA=.044, NNFI=.99, CFI=.99		

Note: Coefficients are from the completely standardized solutions. The factor loadings and the latent factors are invariant across the two cultures.

TABLE 3
One-sample t-tests for Cultural Indicators

Cultural Values	Mean	SD	t-value (two-tailed)	p-value
<i>Chosun ads (N=638)</i>				
Collectivism/Individualism	2.21	2.71	6.62	.000
Time orientation	2.05	1.65	23.74	.000
<i>The NYT ads (N=624)</i>				
Collectivism/Individualism	1.94	2.79	3.98	.000
Time orientation	1.27	1.53	12.52	.000

Note: For the comparison of the cultural dimensions within each culture, the bipolar scale was constructed. That is, for the collectivism-individualism scale, collectivism indicators were rescaled as -1 (instead of 1) and 0, and summed with individualism indicators. As a result, the I/C unidimensional scale ranges from -5 to 8 and thus, test value is set as 1.5. The same process is applied to the time dimension (ranging from -3 to 4; test value, .5)

TABLE 4
Statistical Results of Cultural Indicators between Korean and the US Ads

Cultural Indicator	Mean		t-value	df	p-value (two-tailed)
	Korea	US			
<i>Collectivism</i>					
Belonging	.28	.37	-3.66	1247.7 ^a	.000
Relationship/harmony	.19	.12	3.59	1222.9 ^a	.001
Sharing/gift-giving	.16	.16	.14	1260	ns
Co-Fulfillment	.08	.09	-.52	1260	ns
Co-Benefit	.11	.11	-.67	1260	ns
<i>Individualism</i>					
Status/Individuality	.84	.77	3.33	1225.9 ^a	.001
Uniqueness/creativity	.23	.21	.61	1260	ns
Escape	.05	.07	-1.74	1211.6 ^a	ns
Self-indulgence	.26	.19	3.09	1249.5 ^a	.002
Competition	.39	.35	1.50	1260.0 ^a	ns
Self-reliance	.23	.34	-4.65	1232.8 ^a	.000
Self-fulfillment	.30	.24	2.63	1256.1 ^a	ns
Self-benefit	.73	.62	4.08	1245.2 ^a	.000

Note: ^a because Levene's test for equality of variances was statistically significant (p<.05), equal variances were not assumed. Bonferroni-type correction adjusted the critical value to .004.

For RQ3 examining which country's ads have more P/F cultural dimensions, results of independent-samples t-tests indicate that Korean ads were more future time-oriented than the US ads (see table 5). More specifically, although not reported here, Korean ads conveyed significantly more of all the four items indicating a future-time orientation, such as 'youth' appeal ($t_{(1250.4)}=7.87, p<.001$), emphasis on future ($t_{(1247.5)}=6.17, p<.001$), positive change ($t_{(1251.6)}=6.18, p<.001$), and introducing new products ($t_{(1191.3)}=9.04, p<.001$). In terms of past-time orientation, however, ads in both countries were not statistically different.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to challenge the dominant polarized framework of cultural values reflected in Western and Eastern culture ads. In addition, the study advances a more valid and rigorous methodology to compare ads cross-culturally.

A majority of cross-cultural studies adopting Hofstede's cultural typology framework have supported their hypotheses that advertising in Western countries reflects individualistic values and a future-time-orientation, whereas advertising in Eastern countries reflects collectivist values and a past-time orientation (Han and

TABLE 5
Statistical Results of the Time Orientation Dimension in Korean and US Ads

Cultural Dimension	Mean		t	df	p-value (two-tailed)
	Korea	US			
Past Time	.18	.20	-.41	1260	ns
Future Time	2.20	1.47	9.18	1256.2 ^a	.000

Note: ^a because Levene's test for equality of variances was statistically significant ($p < .05$), equal variances were not assumed.

Shavitt 1994; Mueller 1987). Some other findings have shown mixed results, in that collectivistic and individualistic indicators are confounded in the US ads and those in Eastern cultures such as China (Lin 2001), Taiwan (Huang 1995), Japan (Mueller 1992), and Korea (Cho et al. 1999). For instance, advertising in developing Eastern countries such as China plays a role as "the pacesetter for Western cultural values" and "a double distorted mirror," revealing the commercial nature of advertising (Cheng and Schweitzer 1996). Recently, Chinese ads have been found to adopt more modern and Western appeals (Lin 2001; Zhang and Shavitt 2003).

This study demonstrates the complexity of cultural values and supports the notion that individualism and collectivism are not mutually exclusive categories existing solely in ads from one culture or another. We showed empirically that South Korean newspaper ads do not merely convey traditional Eastern cultural values such as sharing with others, collective fulfillment, and respect for tradition and emphasis on antiques. Rather, such ads appeared to readily accept individualistic values such as indulgence, accomplishment and competition, and future-oriented values such as youth and change. Similarly, the US ads promoted group belonging as well as individualistic and future-oriented values. These value results, while contradictory with some past advertising studies (Han and Shavitt 1994; Miracle et al. 1992), are in line with the ones reported in a meta-analysis of I/C psychology research (Oyserman et al. 2002). Oyserman et al. (2002) concluded that Americans may not be significantly different in collectivism from Koreans, and "may even report higher collectivism than others when collectivism is assessed with sense of 'belonging' and 'seeking others' advice" (p. 20). Thus, it may be more accurate to measure each cultural indicator separately, rather than to measure mean-scored I/C dimensions. In addition, our multi-group confirmatory factor analysis indicated that a priori assumptions about cultural dimensions constructed by given indicators might not be valid across cultures. In line with more rigorous cross-cultural methodology advocated by Van de Vijver and Leung (1997), we suggest that the factor structures of cultural dimensions should be statistically tested and confirmed.

Alternative explanations of our findings suggest that Korean ads may in fact reflect the evolving value orientations of the culture (McCarty 1994). Experiencing social change and Westernization in the globalization process, Korean ads may portray future orientations rather than past beliefs. If advertising reflects desired or future values, then the content analyses may not match cultural value expectations. For instance, Cho et al. (1999) found that Korean ads were not more collectivistic than the US ads, even though Moon and Franke (2001) reported that Korean advertising practitioners held more collectivistic and traditional work ethics than their US counterparts.

Finally, the question of whether advertising reflects current cultural values might be explained by the commercial nature of advertising itself. For example, Mueller (1987) pointed out that Japanese advertising would adopt Western appeals, "if it fits the consumer needs." Korean advertising might also adopt more Western and individualistic values to appeal to the interests of younger target audiences. For instance, the headline of one camera ad, "My baby doesn't need a father (Because I can use this product for my baby without its father's help)," featured a young businesswoman holding her baby. The emphasis in this ad may not reflect mainstream cultural values, but might appeal to independent-minded young Korean women. Such an argument lies at the core of Pollay's assertion (1986) that advertising is a distorted mirror, because it reflects only certain values and lifestyles, not a full array of them. Thus, the cultural values portrayed in Korean ads may not be well correlated with past values. We suggest that cross-cultural advertising studies should go beyond bipolar (Western versus Eastern, Individualism versus Collectivism) frameworks and reconsider assumptions that advertising reflects aggregate cultural values that are fixed and constant over time. Considering that advertising is influenced by every facet of political, economic, social, and cultural life from within and between cultures, we should understand advertising content under a greater variety of social contexts (Lester 1994).

Although this study leaves more questions than answers, we believe that we addressed some important issues for cross-cultural advertising literature, within limited data and space. Future studies may explore further to what extent advertising reflects cultural values in the very society along with theoretical modeling to fit better for Western versus Eastern advertising comparison.

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Cultural Differences in Fan Ritualization: A Cross-Cultural Perspective of the Ritualization of American and Japanese Baseball Fans

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to conceptualize the fan ritualization process through which an individual acquires ritualized sports fandom, as characterized by symbolized, role-assimilated, and self-enacted sports-related consumption experiences. Sports fans employ several fan ritualization strategies including formalism, symbolic performance, traditionalism, and socializing in order to secure ritualized sports fandom. However, these strategies of fan ritualization are culture-specific because sports fans authorize and legitimize ritualized sports fandom according to their cultural values. This paper offers several propositions regarding cultural differences in fan ritualization between American and Japanese baseball fans.

At least two-thirds of Americans consider themselves to be sports fans (Lieberman 1991). In spite of the pervasiveness of sports as entertainment, media consumption, or the focal point of conversation, little research, less than five percent of the work in sports psychology and sports sociology (Wann and Hamlet 1995), has investigated the thoughts and behaviors of fans. This had resulted in a lack of understanding of sports fans and their behavior.

The sports literature has only generically identified sports fans as individuals with an enduring interest in sports, and the definition of "sports fan" has not been clearly distinguished from that of a "sport spectator" (Wann et al. 2001). Sports fandom is in a limited fashion defined as "the degree to which subjects considered themselves to be sport fans" (Wann 1998, p.287). On the other hand, some scholarly literature on fans (Jenson 1992) has highlighted fans as "deviant from normal," focusing on the excessiveness of their behavior and treating them as abnormal and disreputable, even dangerous.

This paper will view sports fandom as ritualized experience. This ritualized fan experience includes the cognitions and feelings that a sports fan experiences; these cognitions and feelings are symbolized, role-assimilated, and self-enacted during the use of a sports-related product or service. Tetreault and Kleine (1990) associate ritualized behavior with role-assimilated and self-reflected mundane repetition across time and place. This ritualized behavior is symbolic-laden as well (Rook 1985). Sports fans may derive the ritualized experiences from their or others' ritualized behavior in sports consumption. This view extends our understanding of sports fandom to a phenomenon symbolized and structured in the cultural values of the particular society in which a sports fan is situated.

In addition, the ritualized fandom perspective acknowledges that individuals may initiate and develop their identities and roles as sport fans through participating in various sport fan rituals, and that these fans can maintain their sports fandom through continued ritual engagements. This may broaden current sports fan socialization theory, which has focused on socialization agents (e.g., family, friends, school, etc.) and sports fan motives (e.g., group affiliation, self-esteem, entertainment, etc.) in the fan socialization process (McPherson 1976).

In this paper, we turn our attention to the "ritualization process" rather than the "ritual." Bell (1992) defines ritualization as a process in which an individual possesses and maintains a

cultural "sense of ritual" through differentiating ritual from non-ritual activities. This differentiation enables the individual to enumerate and legitimize symbolic meanings of a ritual. However, the strategies of ritualization are culture-specific because each culture differentiates ritual from non-ritual activities according to its own value system. Based on Bell (1992)'s definition of ritualization, we define fan ritualization as the process in which an individual acquires ritualized sports fandom through continued fan ritual engagements and through differentiating ritual from non-ritual activities based on the society's cultural values and social relations.

We will investigate cultural differences in fan ritualization, selecting American and Japanese baseball fans as the research domain. Baseball has been popular both in the United States and Japan for a long time despite the cultural differences between these two countries. A variety of the fan rituals have been developed throughout the long history of baseball in both countries. Baseball is an extremely ritual-laden activity that lends itself to such observation.

In the first section of the paper, we discuss how sports fandom is defined as ritualized experience. Next, we discuss how an individual acquires and maintains ritualized sports fandom through the fan ritualization process. Then, in our discussion of cultural differences in fan ritualization, we explain how culture influences the ritualization processes, and generate several propositions about differences in the fan ritualization process between American and Japanese baseball fans. Finally, we will discuss the implications of this perspective in terms of extending current theories of sports fandom and fan socialization.

SPORTS FANDOM AS RITUALIZED EXPERIENCES

Some aspects of sports fans' ritualized behavior are readily observable. It is not uncommon to note the ritualized sport fans wearing their favorite team colors on game day, preserving traditional values, celebrating patriotism at international games by decorating their body with national flags, and symbolizing personal meaning through sport-related material possessions (Eastman and Riggs 1994; Summers, Johnson, and Kennedy 2001).

This view of sport fandom as ritualized experience offers extensions to the current understanding of sports fandom, which has been limited to the degree to which individuals consider themselves to be sports fans or the amount of money and time that they spend on sports-related consumption each year (Wann 1998). Ritualized sports fandom can be characterized as "symbolized, role-assimilated, and self-enacted" sports-related consumption experience. Each of these three components is explored below.

First, symbolized consumption experiences are easily observable in sports fandom. Through objects and activities (e.g., apparel colors and types of cheering), sports fans develop, maintain, and manipulate various types of symbolized meanings and values about themselves, their favorite teams and players, games, etc. Derbaix, Decrop, and Cabossart (2002) in their study of Belgian soccer fans, reported that material possessions—colors of clothes and scarves—are strongly related to their soccer consumption, and that the goods associated with soccer have symbolic functions: identification,

integration, expression, and sacralization. Sports fans share and communicate those symbolized meanings and values with other fans, and, in addition, these symbols serve the function of categorizing them according to their favorite teams, and to their involvement and knowledge levels (Derbaix et al. 2002; Holt 1992, 1995).

The meanings and values symbolized by sports fans represent social and cultural values. Furthermore, new symbolic meanings may frequently emerge as a consequence of changes in social values or extraordinary social occurrences (e.g., war, revolution, or elections). For example, during World War II (1940-1945), many Americans, including President Roosevelt, viewed baseball fandom as vital for sustaining the nation's morale (Weiller and Higgs 1997). In the same sense, patriotism became widely embraced by American baseball fans following the terrorists' attack on September 11, 2001.

Second, ritualized sports fans are role-assimilated. There are different roles for home-fans and away-fans in terms of seat locations, cheering, or even activities outside of the stadium. Kelly (1997) observed that Japanese fans cheer only when their team is at bat, but not when it is in the field. There are "hitting marches," but no "fielding marches." Although sports fans have the freedom to enact their role in their sports consumption, on occasion they will experience embarrassing moments if they neglect those roles. Holt (1995), in his observation of Chicago Cubs' fans, reported that fans sitting in the left field bleachers show their loyalty to the team through the "throwing back" ritual; failure to throw the opposing player's homerun ball back to the field exposes the fan to immediate criticism from other spectators. Fans of several other Major League Baseball teams in the United States have currently incorporated this ritual as well.

A sports fan's role enactment may be either passive or active (Rook 1985). Some baseball fans show active role enactment; for example, one can observe devoted fans who voluntarily lead collective cheering in Japanese baseball games (Kelly 1997). Most Japanese baseball fan clubs are managed based on their fans' voluntary cooperation. Even though the fan clubs sometimes receive support from team management, for instance when purchasing group season tickets, in running the clubs most club members have self-defined roles such as providing drinks and food or playing a musical instrument on a game day (Kelly 1997).

This self-enacted volunteerism of sports fans is also representative of their fandom. Ritualized sports fans transform the roles and regularities that are, sometimes, externally prescribed in their behavior into internally self-endorsed ones. Deci and Ryan (1991) suggest that people accept values and regulatory processes that are endorsed by the social order, but are not intrinsically appealing initially, through an internalization process.

Interest/excitement has been identified as a significant factor in motivating individuals to internalize or self-enact those values (Deci and Ryan 1991). Csikszentmihalyi (1975) proposes that true enjoyment accompanies the experience of flow, providing a peculiar, dynamic, and holistic sensation of total involvement with the activity itself. Holt (1992) observed that many baseball fans felt transcended in a number of situations, such as when dramatic situations and outstanding performances occurred while watching a game in the stadium.

In addition, the other major component in internalizing the roles and values of sport fandom is their need for relatedness with others (Deci and Ryan 1991). Sports fans may have a *communitas* experience as they support their team. In the experience of *communitas*, they feel the disappearance of everyday social roles and status, and develop intense comradeship with each other (Turner 1969). In the context of Chicago Cubs baseball, Holt (1995)

describes this feeling as emerging from the consumption practice of "play," which is one of the four ways people consume.

We have discussed three major characteristics—symbolized, role-assimilated, and self-enacted—in defining sports fandom as ritualized experience. Our next step is to investigate how a sports fan acquires the ritualized fandom in his or her sports consumption. We propose that individuals may become ritualized—symbolized, role-assimilated, and self-enacted—through a ritualization process in which the individual possesses and maintains a sense of ritual by differentiating ritual from non-ritual activities. However, the ritualization process is culture-specific because each culture has its own values concerning the legitimization and internalization processes. In the next section, we will discuss cultural differences in fan ritualization between American and Japanese baseball fans.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE FAN RITUALIZATION PROCESS

Following Driver (1998), Arnould (2001) suggests that ritual provides society with at least three functions—order, community, and transformation—and these functions are achieved by allowing people to experience emergent shared emotions through manipulating objects and symbols in the ritual. Arnould (2001) further notes that these shared emotions play a role for consumers in shaping consumption decisions and behaviors. In the same sense, a sports fan is able to initiate and develop ritualized sports fandom—symbolized, role-assimilated, and role-enacted—through the continued ritual engagements which continually provide them the emergent shared emotions.

In adapting Bell's (1997) discussion on ritualization strategies, we will introduce several fan ritualization strategies—formalism, symbolic performance, traditionalism, and socialization—which produce ritualized fans. As we mentioned earlier, culture determines the effectiveness of each strategy and, thus, plays an essential role in fan ritualization. We will investigate the differences in effectiveness of the ritualization strategies between American and Japanese baseball fans. However, stereotyped cultural characteristics (e.g., individualism and collectivism) are not sufficient for a full understanding of the baseball fan ritualization processes. Further consideration should include how baseball becomes contextualized in each society.

Formalism

Formality is one of the most frequently observed characteristics of ritual. Bell (1997) noted that the formality of a ritual is associated with "the use of a more limited and rigidly organized set of expressions and gestures, a restricted code of communication or behavior in contrast to a more open or elaborate code" (p.139). The formalization of behavior is effective in enhancing the particularity of a situation by contrasting it with less special ones, as this promotes the conventional and idealized order related to the event (Harris 1983).

This formality of behavior in ritual, in many cases, develops into sets of rules that normalize ritual activities. These normative rules may regulate ritual activities by elaborating the procedure and the limits of acceptable behavior in the ritual. One will face criticism from other group members when she or he attempts to act differently than directed by the rules of ritual. Turner (1969) explicitly argues that ritual involves obligation, and all members of a society should follow the rules of the ritual. Ritualization by means of rule-governance gives rise to the engagement of cultural and social customs in defining ritual activities.

Baseball fans commonly ritualize their behavior by formalizing, or further normalizing their behavior. The fans should stand up

as a way of displaying respect to their nations when national anthems are playing at the beginning of a game. Furthermore, some fans are likely to feel a sense of guilt or a “fear of being an outsider” if they act differently from those who follow the rules and conventions of baseball. Refusal to take an integral at-bat with seriousness can certainly capture the disdain of fellow onlookers who might view such a moment as being near sacred-like. The rules formalizing baseball fans behavior in the fan ritualization process are different between American and Japanese baseball fans.

American baseball fans seem to have self-disciplined rules in formalizing their behavior. This means that American fans mostly follow the rules of baseball for the sake of their own playful experience in baseball consumption (Holt 1992). The self-disciplined rules embraced by American baseball fans seem to be associated with their individualistic goals of pursuing self-identity as baseball fans rather than the statement of collective loyalty made by the rigidly disciplined fan clubs of professional baseball in Japan. Thus, for American fans, following rules is an individualistic pursuit, and it tends to be less influenced by social context; it is stable across time and place. Many American fans display ritualized activities, including wearing team colors, consuming special foods or drinks, or performing routine preparatory activities while watching a game on the television (Eastman and Riggs 1994). We believe that these ritualized activities in front of the TV, which are often enacted individually, are fairly consistent with those performed by many fans in the stadium. American fans are more inclined to display consistent ritualized behavior irrespective of the setting.

On the other hand, rules for Japanese baseball fans are likely to be more group-disciplined. For Japanese fans, following the rules of baseball seems to be situational, and social surroundings are crucial factors in enacting the rules. The maintenance of harmony with other fans by complying with the rules may contribute to enhancing the consumption experience. For instance, many Japanese baseball fans bring a plastic megaphone to participate in collective cheering, even though they may be not familiar with those cheering activities. Japanese baseball fans are likely to display different behaviors in a public setting versus in a private setting. For instance, we can observe some highly-identified fans who display few ritualized behaviors while watching a game in the privacy of their own home (Eastman and Riggs 1994).

Thus, we propose that American baseball fans will tend to adhere to more self-disciplined rules, while Japanese baseball fans will tend to adhere to more group-disciplined rules in formalizing behavior. This may be consistent with the idea that people from individualist cultures are more self-oriented, whereas people from collectivist cultures are more group-oriented (Markus and Kitayama 1991; Triandis et al. 1988). Moreover, Riess (1999) suggests that Americans have celebrated individualism, self-reliance, and cultural pluralism through linking agrarian/rural and democracy myths to their baseball consumption. On the other hand, the Japanese as fans and players of baseball have spiritualized its collective virtues—teamwork, harmony, authoritarian leadership—in the practice of baseball (Guttman and Thompson 2001). For the Japanese, baseball has been a powerful vehicle to promote the “Japanese management style” based on collectivism in the modernization era.

P1: American baseball fans tend to adhere to more self-disciplined rules than group-disciplined rules in formalizing behavior in the fan ritualization process.

P2: Japanese baseball fans tend to adhere to more group-disciplined rules than self-disciplined rules in formalizing behavior in the fan ritualization process.

Symbolic Performance

The performative dimension of ritual—the deliberate and voluntary doing of symbolic actions in public—is understood as something beyond routine reality (Bell 1997). Ritual performance is dramatized by highly visual imagery, dramatic sound, and extraordinary settings. These dramatized performances in ritual evoke intense emotions among participants by attaching specialness to the event, which easily induces participants to link powerful symbolic meanings with the ritual.

These symbolic ritual performances by baseball fans can be classified into two types: self- and collective-expressive ritual performances. Self-expressive rituals reflect the visibility of each individual’s ritual performance. An individual performer is easily identifiable in terms of his or her role or aesthetic expressions while performing a ritual. For example, baseball fans often hold up creative and special signs (e.g., The CUBS and WGN are #1 (Holt 1995)) to support the team and players, which can also serve to “personalize” the experience of the fan (Holt 1995). But, there is no strict rule as to what kinds of messages should be used on the signs. Some signs can be quite benign, indicating support for the team while others can be quite caustic, often used to demonstrate ire against specific players (e.g. Sammy Sosa using a corked bat), coaches, or ownership. An individual’s creativity concerning ritual performance may play a significant role in distinguishing him/her from other fans in the ritual. Setting oneself apart from the crowd may indeed be the motivation.

On the other hand, a collective ritual refers to ritual activities that represent a harmonized expression of symbolic meanings by the participants. This ritual requires unified and cooperative efforts from every participant. Examples would be a wave encircling the stadium and the displaying of a huge player’s uniform or a flag on the stands. Many collective rituals demand organized preparation and practices before fans perform them, whereas the “wave” (observed in Western venues) does not. Further, in Japan, drawing individual attention to oneself during a game, or displaying signs opposing team management, players, etc., is not likely to occur.

Thus, we argue that collective rituals are more salient to Japanese baseball fans than American baseball fans, whereas self-expressive rituals are more salient to American baseball fans than Japanese baseball fans. Collective rituals are frequently observed in Japanese baseball stadiums. Kelly (1997) reported that collective chanting and cheering accompanied by the pounding rhythm of *taiko* drums (similar to Western bass drums) continue through the whole game and that several leaders organize the chanting and cheering for better performance. He also discusses a collective ritual observed at Hanshin Tigers’ home games: the soaring of thousands of whistling balloons into the air in the bottom of the seventh inning. On the other hand, American baseball fans (with a notable exception being the Atlanta Braves’ chopping chant) tend to be more self-expressive in ritual performance. Instead of focusing on collective chanting and cheering, television cameras point to individual fans holding up creative signs supporting the team and players as well as expressing their own views.

P3: The self-expressive aspect of symbolic performance in baseball fan rituals is a more influential factor for American baseball fans in the fan ritualization process than for Japanese baseball fans.

P4: The collective-expressive aspect of symbolic performance in baseball fan rituals is a more influential factor for Japanese baseball fans in the fan ritualization process than for American baseball fans.

Traditionalism

Traditionalization is a common way of legitimizing ritual activities by attaching mythical and sacred power to “past” in the ritualization process (Bell 1997). Bell (1997) notes that, as a powerful tool of legitimation, traditionalization may be manifested in “the repetition of activities from an earlier period, the adaptation of such activities in a new setting, or even the creation of practices that simply evoke links with the past” (p. 145). In their study of the ritualization associated with inherited possessions, Arnould, Price, and Curasi (1999) found that people generally use the past as a source of ritual meanings.

Nostalgia for the past is essential to sports fans in enhancing their enjoyment in the consumption of sports (Summers et al. 2001). This sense of the past in sports consumption plays a role in the construction of a shared collective identity among the fans. This nostalgia is associated with sports fans’ enjoyable childhoods, the perceived betterness of the past generation, and the original lessons of a sport. The fans bestow mythical and sacred values on those experiences. Work on nostalgia in consumer behavior research bears a similar definition, whereby a general preference toward objects from one’s younger days is observed (Holbrook 1993).

For Americans, the nostalgia of baseball seems to closely overlap with American’s small-town, pre-industrial past (May 1989). This reason may reflect the pastoral characteristic of American baseball because baseball started in rural nineteenth-century America (Seymour 1990). As well, adult fans may have enjoyable memories of their own playing days in rural hometowns before they moved into urban areas. This perspective is consistent with the rural town setting of the nostalgic baseball movie, “The Field of Dreams.”

For the Japanese, baseball is a symbol of modernization and westernization (Kelly 1998; May 1989). After baseball was first introduced in 1873, it became Japan’s most popular modern participant sport in the late Meiji period (1868-1912), Japan’s early modernization era (Guttmann and Thompson 2001). Many Japanese have recollections of the Koshien high school baseball tournament that started in 1915 and, since 1924, has been held at Koshien Stadium in Osaka. This stadium is symbolized as the emergence of modernity to many Japanese (e.g., their first experience with flush toilets) (Kelly 1997). Since the inception of a professional league in 1938, modernization has constantly underscored baseball’s continuing popularity. The professional baseball league has prospered under big corporate ownership and throughout the last century, baseball has been a significant arena for the display of the ideologies and institutions of modern Japan (Kelly 1998).

P5: The rural and pre-industrial aspect of traditionalism in baseball fan rituals is a more influential factor for American baseball fans in the fan ritualization process than for Japanese baseball fans.

P6: The modernization aspect of traditionalism in baseball fan rituals is a more influential factor for Japanese baseball fans in the fan ritualization process than for American baseball fans.

Socialization

Socialization in the ritualization process refers to a set of learning activities through the sharing ritual activities and their symbolic meanings with other people. Individuals might learn how to perform the various activities of a ritual and its symbolic meanings from family, friends, community members, and/or media. Frequently, people join in and create ritual communities to learn ritual activities and to share ritual experiences with others (e.g., biker groups (Schouten and McAlexander (1995) and Star

Trek fan communities (Kozinet 2001)). Those who have multiple socializing agents may be concerned with the agents’ authoritative ability to legitimize ritual performance.

Bell (1992) introduced the concept of “ritual specialists” who have socially recognized authority to judge the importance of ritual and the performance’s correctness. Ritual specialists may serve to legitimize the social importance of ritual, and to diffuse the correct way of performing it. However, the status of ritual specialists seems to reflect the degree of hierarchical structure in a society (Bell 1992). In a society where the social hierarchy is strong, the role of the specialist in legitimizing ritual activities is much greater than that in societies with weaker hierarchical structures.

The concept of a ritual specialist is useful in explaining baseball fans’ socializing in the fan ritualization. As noted earlier, fans get information on correct ritual performance of a ritual and its meaning from a parent, sibling, close friend, other fans, or media. The fans—as parents, friends, co-workers, or even media—may also act as ritual specialists who provide other fans with ritual information. For example, many baseball fans join in fan clubs to share ritual experiences with others, and their fan club activities offer the chance to learn something from ritual specialists.

The source of authority seems an important factor in determining the degree of legitimacy of various social groups as ritual specialists. It seems that other-focused and high-power difference cultures (e.g., Japanese and Korean) consider officialness and representativeness in overall society to be more important than close ties in the establishment of the authority of social groups. The reason for this is likely to be that collectivist cultures conform more readily to influences based on hierarchical power structures than do individualist cultures (Smith 2001).

Therefore, we expect that the authority of social groups as ritual specialists in fan ritualization will vary between Japan and the United States. We argue that the official groups (e.g., official supporter groups or the media) have legitimacy as ritual specialists in the fan ritualization process in Japan more than in the United States. On the other hand, close social groups (e.g., family or close friends) will act as the ritual specialists in the ritualization process more in the United States than in Japan.

According to Kelly (1997), *oendan* (supporter group) plays a major role in devising fan rituals and educating less ritualized fans about Japanese baseball. Otnes and Scott (1996) pointed out that the impact of the media is much greater in symbolizing ritual meanings of advertised products in Japan than in the United States. On the other hand, Wakefield (1995), in a study of Pittsburgh Pirates’ fans, reported that perceived peer group acceptance has a positive effect on the individual’s identification with the team, and with repatronage intention.

P7: When baseball fans are socializing others in the fan ritualization process, close social groups (e.g., family or friend groups) are more influential ritual specialists for American baseball fans than for Japanese baseball fans.

P8: When baseball fans are socializing others in the fan ritualization process, socially authorized groups (e.g., media or supporter groups) are more influential ritual specialists for Japanese baseball fans than for American baseball fans.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This perspective of sports fandom as ritualized experience views sports fans as active participants who symbolize and celebrate sports consumption by voluntary role-enactments as sports fans. This sports fandom is much more than spending money to

attend a game and to buy sport-related goods. However, most sports research measures sports fandom by asking an individual about his/her interest in sports, and the amount of money spent on sports consumption (Wann 1998). As Wann et al. (2001) mention, this operationalization in defining sports fandom may result in an unclear distinction between sports fans and sports spectators. The attempts to identify the symbolic meanings and roles associated with sports fans in their sports consumption may offer extensions to the current understanding of sports fandom.

In addition, most sports research relates sports fans' sense of self to their team/player identification, which is defined as the degree of psychological connection to specific teams or players (Cialdini et al. 1976; Fisher and Wakefield 1998). However, team/player identification is not the only factor shaping sports fans' sense of self. They actively create and build their identities as sports fans by attaching symbolic meanings to objects and activities, securing their valuable traditions, and anchoring their behavior in cultural and social orders through the fan ritualization process. Therefore, sports fans, in their roles as ritual participants, may celebrate not only successful team performance, but also symbolized cultural meanings through engaging in a variety of fan rituals.

This perspective of the fan ritualization process may broaden current sports fan socialization theories. The theories of sports fan socialization have mostly focused on the roles of socialization agents (e.g., family, friends, and peer group) and sports fan motives (e.g., group affiliation, self-esteem, and entertainment) in the fan socialization process (McPherson 1976). However, little concern has been given to sport fans' desires to connect themselves to "cultural continuities" (Arnould 2001) through sports activities. Arnould et al. (1999) argue that consumers have a desire for ritual action to secure cultural meanings of consuming mass-marketed consumer goods. The fan ritualization process enables them to link their sports experience to cultural values and meaningful social relations by acquiring and maintaining ritualized fandom.

Finally, we call for further investigation about the consumer ritualization processes in consumer research. Although several studies have examined ritualization strategies that consumers employ to link their consumption activities to cultural categories (decommodifying market products in the Thanksgiving Day (Wallendorf and Arnould 1989) or constructing descent groups to hand down inherited objects (Arnould et al. 1999)), consumer researchers have not systematically studied ritualization processes. As we argue in this paper, these consumer ritualization processes will be culture-specific because consumers symbolize and authorize their consumption experiences according to their own cultural values. It will be valuable to study the cultural differences in consumer ritualization processes concerning the same consumption phenomenon around world (e.g., sports fandom).

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Men and Women Watching and Reading: Gender, Media, and Message Effects in Advertising

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In marketing, gender is commonly used as a basis for market segmentation because it is one of a few variables that meet the criteria for successful strategy implementation: (1) gender is easily identifiable, (2) gender segments are accessible, and (3) gender segments are large enough to be profitable (Darley and Smith 1995). For advertisers, this practice suggests the importance of understanding how males and females respond to persuasive appeals because ad messages are one of the major ways of communicating with these consumer groups. Ads are typically targeted to one or both of these segments, and their effectiveness may depend on how males and females respond to the ads.

The goal of our study is to investigate gender differences in responses to advertising. Our basic thesis, which builds on the research by Meyers-Levy and Sternthal (1991) and Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran (1991), is that females are predisposed to a detailed information processing strategy whereas males are predisposed to heuristic message processing. Specifically, we examine how these predispositions interact with two characteristics of the ad, type of media and framing of the message, in determining males' and females' responses to advertising. These characteristics can support either detailed or heuristic processing, and our general argument is that an individual will respond to the ad more favorably when ad characteristics support the use of strategy this individual is predisposed to.

The Effect of Media. The existing literature (Chaudhuri and Buck 1995; Batra 1986) suggests that messages presented in print provide an opportunity for high message processing because in print individuals may choose an optimal pace to process the message, stopping to consider the arguments and elaborating on them at will. In contrast, broadcast ads are fleeting and not under the control of the viewer.

Integration of these findings with the notion of gender differences in information processing strategies suggests that print ads allow, while broadcast ads inhibit, the use of processing strategy females are predisposed toward, namely, detailed processing. The fact that print ads allow detailed processing, however, doesn't mean that they cannot be processed in a heuristic manner. In fact, we expect that males, by virtue of their inclination toward heuristic processing, will not use the opportunity to elaborate on print ads but instead will process them via a peripheral route similarly to how they would process broadcast ads. We further suggest that an individual will enjoy the experience of watching the ad to a greater extent when the ad permits him or her to use the processing strategy the individual is predisposed to. Thus, we hypothesize a two-way interaction between gender and type of media:

H_1 : Females will report a more favorable viewing experience for print than for broadcast ads.

H_2 : Males will report equally favorable viewing experiences for print and broadcast ads.

The knowledge of how individuals feel while viewing the ads is certainly interesting yet not very helpful for predicting consumer behavior. A more complete picture of gender differences in responses to advertising requires addressing the issue of ad effectiveness, which we conceptually define as the potential of an ad to

influence behavior and operationalize through a) intentions to buy a product; and b) likelihood of recommending the product to friends and/or family members (WOM communication). Specifically, we suggest that when a message is processed in a manner consistent with predispositions, it will not only result in a more pleasant viewing experience but will also be more effective:

H_3 : Females will report more intentions to a) purchase the product, and b) to engage in WOM communication for print than for broadcast ads (because they will process print ads in a detailed manner)

H_4 : Males will report equal intentions to a) purchase the product, and b) to engage in WOM communication for print and for broadcast ads (because they will process both in a heuristic manner).

The Effect of Message Framing. In addition to the effect of media, we also wanted to investigate whether males and females respond differently to positively and negatively framed messages. For the purposes of our study a negatively framed ad is one which emphasizes losses if one does not use the product, and a positively framed ad is one which emphasizes gains that result from using the product. Two studies (Levin and Gaeth 1988; Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy 1990) confirmed that people respond differently to positively and negatively framed messages. In general, it has been shown that when there is little emphasis on detailed processing, the ad is more persuasive when it is framed positively than when it is framed negatively; however, when detailed processing is emphasized, persuasion is greater when the message is framed negatively than when it is framed positively.

The implication of these findings for our research is that positively framed messages are more likely to be effective for males than for females because they resonate more with a heuristic, rather than with a detailed processing strategy. We expect this difference to be most salient for broadcast ads because in this case *both* type of media and message framing will support the processing strategy males are predisposed to and discourage the females' predisposed processing strategy. Thus, we suggest:

H_5 : Among all conditions, males will report the *most* intentions to a) purchase the product, and b) to engage in WOM communication for positively framed broadcast ads.

H_6 : Among all conditions, females will report the *least* intentions to a) purchase the product, and b) to engage in WOM communication for positively framed broadcast ads.

Study and Results. The experimental design involved three between-subject conditions: gender, type of media (print vs. broadcast) and message framing (positive vs. negative). Seventy undergraduate business students (34 males and 36 females) participated in our study.

The expected interaction between type of media and gender on viewing experience was close to the significant level ($p=.12$) with the means in the predicted direction. The results of simple effects

tests indicated that females reported a significantly more favorable viewing experience for print than for broadcast ads ($M_{\text{print}}=4.91 > M_{\text{broadcast}}=3.89, p < .05$), thus providing support for H_1 . Consistent with H_2 , there was no variation in males' responses to print and broadcast ads ($p > .90$).

Regarding ad effectiveness, the interaction effect between gender and type of media was marginally significant for the purchase intentions ($p < .10$) and highly significant for the likelihood of recommending product to friends and/or family members ($p < .05$). The simple effects tests revealed that females reported significantly more intentions to buy the product ($M_{\text{print}}=5.88 > M_{\text{broadcast}}=4.81, p < .05$) and to engage in WOM communication ($M_{\text{print}}=5.75 > M_{\text{broadcast}}=4.19, p < .05$) after viewing print rather than broadcast ads. Thus, hypotheses 3a and 3b are supported. Consistent with hypotheses 4a and 4b, no significant differences between males' responses to print and broadcast ads were found for either purchase intentions ($p > .40$) or WOM communication intentions ($p > .50$).

Testing H_5 and H_6 , we found that three-way interaction among gender, type of media, and message framing was marginally significant for intentions to buy the product ($p = .11$) and highly significant for intentions to engage in WOM communication ($p < .05$). As predicted by H_{5a} , males reported the highest intentions to recommend the product ($M = 4.43$) after watching positively framed broadcast ad. Consistent with H_6 , females reported the lowest scores on both intention to buy the product ($M = 3.70$) and likelihood to engage in WOM communication ($M = 4.61$) in this condition.

Taken together, these results suggest that an individual responds more favorably to the ad when its characteristics support the use of processing strategy this individual is predisposed to. Specifically, females enjoyed the experience of viewing the ad to a greater extent and reported more behavioral intentions when the ad encouraged detailed rather than heuristic processing. As regards males, they reported equally favorable responses to print and broadcast ads, however, when both type of media and message framing encouraged heuristic processing, males rated ad as the most effective.

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Magnitude of Effects of Television Viewing on Social Perceptions Vary as a Function of Data Collection Method: Implications for Psychological Processes

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INTRODUCTION

Cultivation Theory

Numerous content analyses of television have shown that a number of constructs are consistently overrepresented on television relative to their real-world incidence. Such constructs include crime, violence, affluence, marital discord, and particular occupations such as doctors and lawyers, just to name a few (Gerbner et al. 2002; Lichter, Lichter, and Rothman 1994; O'Guinn and Shrum 1997). Cultivation theory posits that frequent viewing of these distortions of reality will increasingly result in the perception that these distortions reflect reality (Gerbner et al. 2002). Numerous studies have confirmed the predicted correlation between amount of viewing and beliefs congruent with the television portrayals. For example, TV viewing has been shown to be positively correlated with estimates of the number of doctors, lawyers, and police officers in the real world (Shrum 1996, 2001), the prevalence of violence (Gerbner et al. 1980; Shrum, Wyer, and O'Guinn 1998), and the prevalence of ownership of expensive products (O'Guinn and Shrum 1997; Shrum 2001). In addition, heavy television viewing has been shown to be associated with greater anxiety and fearfulness (Bryant, Carveth, and Brown 1981), greater faith in doctors (Volgy and Schwarz 1980), greater pessimism about marriage (Shrum 1999), greater interpersonal mistrust (Gerbner et al. 1980; Shrum 1999), and higher levels of materialism (Burroughs, Shrum, and Rindfleisch 2002).

Cognitive Processes and Cultivation

Recent work has begun to explore the cognitive processes that may underlie the cultivation effect. To understand the cognitive processes that underlie the effects of television is particularly important given the typically correlational nature of cultivation-type studies. Cultivation is for the most part a repeated exposure process and thus experiments are unlikely to capture effects, particularly with stable beliefs such as attitudes and values. Consequently, television viewing is typically measured rather than manipulated, and as a result is prone to problems associated with inferring causality. This highlights the importance of developing cognitive process models that can explain cultivation effects. Although such models cannot assure causality, they can increase confidence in inferring it. If models that specify particular conditions under which the effect does and does not operate (i.e., specifying mediators and moderators) can be tested and confirmed, it makes the proposed causal path more difficult to explain in terms of third-variable or reverse-causal mechanisms. This difficulty arises because not only must the reverse-causal or third-variable explanation account for the main effect, it must also account for the specific pattern of the interaction (Shrum 2002; Shrum et al. 2003).

Heuristic Processing Model of Cultivation Effects

One such model that has been developed has been termed the Heuristic Processing Model of Cultivation Effects (for a review, see Shrum et al. 2004). This model pertains specifically to the relation between television viewing and social reality judgments of set-size or probability (Shrum 1995). Examples include estimating—either for self or society—the probability or prevalence of crime, divorce, millionaires, and ownership of expensive products. The model has two general propositions. The first is that television viewing increases

construct accessibility. In particular, television viewing makes information pertaining to relevant constructs (i.e., crime, lawyers, swimming pools) more accessible, and more so for those who view relatively more television. The second general proposition is that the set-size and probability judgments typically used to test for cultivation effects are made by applying cognitive heuristics, in particular the availability (Tversky and Kahneman 1973) and simulation (Kahneman and Tversky 1982) heuristics. The use of cognitive heuristics is primarily due to three factors: 1) the types of judgments are for the most part memory-based (Hastie and Park 1986) and thus are made in real time by the recall of relevant information (exemplars), 2) the judgments are usually considered difficult, and 3) given that the data are typically collected via anonymous surveys, motivation to be accurate is often low. These conditions have been shown to facilitate the use of cognitive heuristics (Sherman and Corty 1984).

From these two general propositions, five specific propositions have been derived. These propositions are shown in table 1. In summary, the model posits that watching television results in the accumulation of numerous exemplars that are frequently portrayed on television. Consequently, these exemplars become more accessible in memory as viewing increases (Proposition 1). Because the types of judgments such as set-size and probability are often made by applying heuristics such as availability, then increased accessibility should result in increased estimates. Thus, television viewing increases accessibility, which in turn increases estimates, indicating a mediating role of accessibility (Proposition 2). However, because the accessible examples being retrieved in forming a set-size judgment such as the percentage of the work force that is lawyers or police officers are television examples, it is likely that most people would not consider these examples to be useful in forming real-world judgments. Thus, in order for the processes to occur as hypothesized, the television exemplars should not be source-discounted (Proposition 3). This lack of discounting would occur if the judgments are made relatively automatically without much effort expended in being accurate.

The final two propositions derive from conditions that have been shown to moderate the use of heuristics (for a review, see Sherman and Corty 1984). If, as hypothesized, people use the availability heuristic because they are not motivated to be accurate (i.e., not motivated to process extensively when answering), then increasing their motivation to process (be accurate) should reduce the reliance on judgmental heuristics, which should in turn reduce reliance on the accessibility of television exemplars, and thus reduce the effect of television (Proposition 4). Conversely, if people's ability to process information at the time of judgment is impaired (e.g., time pressure, distraction), it should increase the reliance on judgmental heuristics relative to conditions in which ability is not impaired and thereby increase the effect of television exemplars (Proposition 5).

As table 1 indicates, the first four propositions have been tested and confirmed across a number of studies. It is the fifth proposition, that ability to process information will moderate the cultivation effect, that is tested in the current study.

OVERVIEW AND METHOD

Ability to process information at the time of judgment is hypothesized to moderate the cultivation effect. Specifically, the

TABLE 1
Heuristic Processing Model of Cultivation Effects

Proposition	Supporting Evidence
1: TV viewing increases construct accessibility	O'Guinn and Shrum (1997); Shrum (1996); Shrum and O'Guinn (1993); Busselle and Shrum (2003)
2: Accessibility mediates the cultivation effect	Shrum (1996); Shrum and O'Guinn (1993); Busselle (2001)
3: TV exemplars are not discounted	Shrum, Wyer, and O'Guinn (1998)
4: Motivation to process information moderates the cultivation effect	Shrum (1996)
5: Ability to process information moderates the cultivation effect	The present study

relation between television viewing and judgment should be greater when ability to process is low than when it is high. To test this proposition, ability to process information was manipulated by varying the time pressure that respondents felt while providing their judgments. Moreover, the operationalization of time pressure was a novel one that may have implications for survey researchers interested in the psychological processes underlying response bias. Specifically, time pressure was manipulated via survey method. Respondents were randomly assigned to receive their survey either by telephone (high time pressure) or by mail (low time pressure). Pretests confirmed the differences in perceptions of time pressure, consistent with research showing that telephone respondents are usually unhappy with the length of telephone interviews and that interviewers often hurry respondents through the items (for a review, see Holbrook, Green, and Krosnick 2003).

Television viewing was measured via multiple measures of hours per day or week of viewing. Dependent measures consisted of having respondents estimate the prevalence of several constructs that have been shown to be overportrayed on television relative to their real-world incidence. Specifically, seven composite dependent measures were developed from items used in previous studies: Occupation (particular occupations), Vice (drug use, prostitution), affluence (ownership of expensive products), societal crime (e.g., national crime rate), personal crime (own risk of crime), personal crime in New York City (representing personal crime risk outside one's own neighborhood), and marital discord.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results were as expected. The strength of the cultivation effect was significant for six of the seven dependent variables in the telephone survey, and these relations held in the presence of multiple control variables. Only estimates of personal crime were uncorrelated with television viewing, and this finding was also expected.¹ None of the correlations between television viewing and the estimates were significant for the mail survey condition.² More to the point of testing Proposition 5, the magnitude of the cultivation effect was significantly greater in the telephone survey condition than in the mail survey condition.

These results provide support for proposition 5 of the model, namely, that ability to process information at the time of judgment will moderate the cultivation effect. Specifically, when respondents

were under more time pressure to respond, they showed a stronger correlation between the magnitude of their estimates and their level of television viewing, compared to those who were under relatively less time pressure. This finding is consistent with the reasoning that in the higher time pressure condition, respondents were more likely to process heuristically (off the top of the head³) and therefore more likely to rely on the accessibility of exemplars to construct their estimates. Because television viewing contributes greatly to the accessibility (of these particular) exemplars, television viewing is also related to the magnitude of the estimates.

The results also have implications for survey researchers interested in issues such as response bias. These results show that research method may affect the type of processing or the extent of processing when constructing judgments. Thus, not only does the survey method affect the purely descriptive aspect of the findings (e.g., the magnitude of the prevalence estimates was significantly greater in the telephone than in the mail condition), but also the theoretical applicability of the findings (e.g., differences in correlations between variables). Future research should consider investigating other possible instances in which differences in processing might result in different correlations between variables.

¹Work by Tyler (1980) indicates that people tend to use media (but not direct experience) to make judgments about societal risk (e.g., societal crime), whereas they tend to use direct experience (but not media) to make judgments of personal risk. This pattern of effects is termed the *impersonal impact hypothesis*. However, other research has shown that direct experience and television viewing can interact such that those with direct experience are particularly affected by the viewing of television crime and violence (Shrum and Bischak 2001).

²It is important not to draw strong conclusions from the lack of cultivation effects noted in the mail survey. Because of differential response rates, the power to detect relations was much less in the mail survey than in the telephone survey. Moreover, the magnitude of the correlations noted in the mail survey were similar (and in fact larger) than those found in meta-analyses (see Morgan and Shanahan 1996). The correlations in this study ranged from $r = .08$ to $r = .23$.

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A Study of Effect Sizes in Marketing Experiments

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ABSTRACT

An investigation is undertaken to empirically document the reported effect sizes of experiments reported in four leading marketing journals from the period 1985 to 1995, following a previous study concerned with the prior decade (Peterson, Albaum & Beltramini, 1985). Using omega-squared (ω^2), Pearson's coefficient (r) and Cohen's index (d) as measures of effect size, the results of 269 experiments, yielding a total of 1,399 experimental effects, were analyzed for the proportion of variance explained. Average incidence of reported ω^2 values has increased from 14% to 25% of experiments since the prior decade, but are still somewhat low.

Purpose of the study

In 1985 Peterson, Albaum and Beltramini conducted a meta-analysis of the effect sizes reported in a number of leading consumer behavior and marketing journals over the previous ten years. This paper reports a similar meta-analysis for the following decade, 1985-1995, allowing comparison of results of the two studies.

The major area of comparison is that of finding if there has been an increase in the proportion of experiments in the relevant journals that report effect size estimates, as measured by omega-squared (ω^2) values. There is also a comparison made between the mean ω^2 values in the two studies; that is, the average percentage of the variance in a response variable that was explained or accounted for by the statistically significant effect reported. In addition, the relationship between several different measures of effect size is also examined, as there is a literature to suggest a consistent difference between such measures should be expected (Oakes, 1986).

This paper, although not identical, is sufficiently similar to the Peterson *et al* study (hereafter called PAB) to allow some meaningful comparisons to be made. Less emphasis is placed, however, on the characteristics of the selected experiments (such as types of effects, experiments, subjects, and response variables), and more emphasis is placed on the comparison of the various measures of effect size, namely omega squared (ω^2), Pearson's coefficient (r) and Cohen's index (d).

RELEVANT LITERATURE

This brief review of the relevant literature touches first upon the importance of effect size to empirical research studies and how it is measured, then on the validity of meta-analyses. Finally, the PAB study –which provided the inspiration for the present work– is inspected in more detail.

Effect size and tests of significance

Effect size is defined as the strength of a relationship or the magnitude of a difference between variables (PAB). It is also referred to as the degree to which the phenomenon is present in the population or the degree to which the null hypothesis is false (Cohen, 1977). Effect sizes can be used both to facilitate the interpretation of research findings and to determine their practical implications (Cooper, 1981). The reporting of effect size is argued to be beneficial, especially so when reported as a supplement to significance tests.

The reason why it is beneficial to report effect size with tests of significance is because tests of significance alone do not accurately indicate of the magnitude of an effect. This is mainly because

tests of significance are not independent of sample size. In fact, it would be a serious case of abuse to even attempt to derive the effect size of rejected null hypotheses purely by analysis of the significance level. The difference between test statistics from different manipulations is by no means an indicator of the extent of the variance between the effect sizes of these manipulations. Indeed, the question becomes not so much if there is a relationship between data in a set, as much as how big the sample must be before a significant relationship is found. Research in various fields has been criticised as being over-reliant on significance testing at the expense of effect sizes, possibly due to the difficulties in quantifying effect size (Irvine, Miles & Evans, 1979).

There are clearly situations when a large effect size is not important. In a practical sense even a tiny effect size may be thought important when multi-million dollar sales is the dependent variable. Even in some academic work it could be argued that it is enough to show the existence of an effect, notwithstanding the size of it. This argument is hard to sustain, though, as even though a tiny effect might be considered "enough" by an author, surely the reader ought to have the prerogative of making that judgement themselves in the light of the sample statistics? The position taken here, then, supports the view of Peterson *et al*, that it is that it is generally better to include an effect size where the data is available as this provides information which should be revealed to the reader.

The need for a common measure of effect size

Various research models have been designed and various test statistics developed to measure effect size in experimental work, such as t , F or χ^2 . In order to apply meta-analytic procedures to these different variables, it is necessary to convert all the various summary statistics into a common measure in order to allow meaningful comparison across the studies.

The most widely used index of effect size is Omega squared (ω^2), which was popularised by Hays (1963) and expounded on by Cohen (1977). Using ω^2 , Cohen provided rough guidelines for categorising small ($\omega^2=0.01$), medium ($\omega^2=0.06$) and large ($\omega^2=0.15$) effect sizes. This was in an attempt to propose conventional effect sizes to help the making of informed decisions about effect size in socio-behavioural research. Two of the most common effect size measures selected, for the purpose of conversion from the various test statistics, are Pearson's Correlation (r) and Cohen's effect size index d . Guidelines for converting some of the summary statistics to r and d (Wolf 1986) are detailed in the Appendix. Cohen (1977) and Glass, McGaw & Smith (1981) provide guidelines for transforming less common statistics.

It is important to note at this point that while there are various measures of effect size, only ω^2 , r and d will be used in the study. It is also interesting to note that ω^2 is consistently 20-25% lower than r^2 (Oakes, 1986). The present study will, in passing, verify this observation.

Meta-analysis

Meta-analysis is an analysis of analyses (Glass 1981). It is a quantitative accumulation and analysis of various test statistics across studies, made without accessing the original study data. Rust, Lehmann and Farley (1990) challenged the assumption that, in meta-analysis, the sample of studies is a fair representation of all the work done in the relevant field. In their study, they proposed that

TABLE 1
Distribution of qualifying articles in various journals

Journal / Proceedings	(%)
Journal of Consumer Research	7.1
Journal of Marketing Research	23.3
Journal of Marketing	4.3
Journal of Advertising Research	4.3
Journal of Applied Psychology	7.8
Association for Consumer Research Proceedings	43.6
American Marketing Association Proceedings	9.6

Source: "A Meta-Analysis of Effect Sizes in Consumer Behavior Experiments".
Journal of Consumer Research, 12(June 1985).

since journals tend to publish only statistically significant results, there could exist some publication bias, which they attempted to estimate. Similarly, Hedges and Olkin (1985) assume that since all statistically non-significant results have been omitted from the analysis, meta-analysis is not a justifiable method. However, this seems a rather unrealistic an assumption. Moreover, results of the 1990 study undertaken by Rust *et al* show that the estimated publication bias in meta-analyses is relatively small.

Previous research, the Peterson, Albaum and Beltramini (1985) study

The PAB study was conducted with the primary intention of empirically documenting the effect sizes in consumer behaviour research experiments reported in the marketing literature. In their study, articles published in seven major marketing journals or proceedings, from 1970 to 1982, were examined. Included in their sample were consumer behaviour experiments that employed at least one treatment manipulation. Furthermore, since ω^2 was selected as their measure of effect size, experiments selected also had to either report ω^2 , or contain sufficient information to permit its computation. A total of 311 articles or papers were identified in the six journals or conference proceedings as indicated in Table 1.

Of the 311 articles or papers, 115 of them contained 118 experiments that either reported ω^2 or contained sufficient information to permit its computation (only 14.4% were reported). Their study involved 1,036 effects, of which 475 were statistically significant at 0.05 or less. The scope of their study was extended to include the analysis of other variables that are potentially related to effect size, such as the type of experiment, the number and type of subjects and factors.

The four characteristics that were found to be significantly ($p \leq 0.01$) correlated with ω^2 are type of effect (main or interaction), type of experiment (field or laboratory), type of subjects and type of response variable (behavioral or others). These four characteristics were subjected to an analysis of variance in order to examine their relationship to effect size. The results of the analysis showed that the type of experiment and type of effect can be expected to affect the effect size of the experiments. For example, field experiments can be expected to report larger effect sizes than laboratory experiments; main effects are associated with higher effect sizes than interaction effects. The type of the experimental subjects is also related to the type of response variable. For example, non-college students can be expected to have a higher probability of increased response homogeneity than college students.

RESEARCH METHOD

The same general approach used in PAB is also used here, to conduct a type of meta-analysis of effect sizes of consumer behavior experiments published in selected, leading marketing journals. The period of interest covers the years from 1985 to 1995.

The sample

Four leading marketing journals were chosen in this study; the *Journal of Marketing* (JM), the *Journal of Marketing Research* (JMR), the *Journal of Advertising Research* (JAR), and the *Journal of Consumer Research* (JCR). These were among the journals examined in the PAB study. It was determined not to follow the lead of PAB, however, and include a psychology journal or conference proceedings, but stick to the main-line marketing publications.

Articles were included in the study based on the following guidelines. First, the article must involve a consumer behaviour experiment. Second, the article must either report ω^2 values or, when ω^2 is not reported, have sufficient statistical information so that ω^2 , r or d can be computed. Third, only results of main effects of experiments are to be considered in cases where ω^2 values have to be computed (this was due to resource limitation rather than to any academic reason). Finally, only test statistics from chi-squared-tests (χ^2), t -tests and F -tests were included.

185 suitable articles from the four marketing journals were identified using these criteria. These articles contained 269 consumer behaviour experiments altogether, and from these experiments a total of 1,399 unique sets of statistical values of experimental effects were gleaned. The *Journal of Marketing* provided 16 articles (8.7%) and 16 experiments (5.6%); the *Journal of Marketing Research* 44 articles (23.8%) and 59 experiments (22%); the *Journal of Advertising Research* 14 articles (7.6%) and 15 experiments (5.6%); and the *Journal of Consumer Research* 111 articles (60%) and 179 experiments (66.5%).

Methods to compute effect sizes

As the aim was to examine effect sizes as measured by ω^2 , r or d , these values had to be computed, using statistical information obtained from the articles themselves, for experiments that did not report them. Three of the most common measures of effect size have been chosen as effect size estimates of the experimental results— ω^2 , r and d values. Where sufficient information is provided, the chi-squared statistic (χ^2), the t -statistic or the F -statistic can be converted into the above-mentioned effect size measures via various formulae.

TABLE 2
Distribution between journals of articles and experiments that do and do not report ω^2

Journal	Articles Reporting ω^2		Articles not reporting ω^2		Experiments reporting ω^2		Experiments not reporting ω^2	
	No.	%	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)
JM	3	7.7	13	8.9	3	4.6	13	6.4
JMR	2	5.1	12	8.2	2	3.0	13	6.4
JAR	9	23.1	35	24.0	15	22.7	44	21.7
JCR	25	64.1	86	58.9	46	69.7	133	65.5
Total	39	100.0	146	100.0	66	100.0	203	100.0
% across	21.1		78.9		24.5		75.5	

TABLE 3
Distribution of experimental effects by reported levels of significance

Journal	Reported Significant Level of Effect					Total
	<0.0001	0.002-0.010	0.011-0.050	0.051-0.100	>0.1	
Journal of Marketing	31	33	29	17	2	112
Journal of Marketing Research	101	87	109	26	2	325
Journal of Advertising Research	36	18	76	0	0	130
Journal of Consumer Research	204	262	295	58	13	832
Total	372	400	509	101	17	1399

RESULTS

Distribution of the incidence and level of effect reporting between journals

Incidence of reported effects

Table 2 contains the distribution of reported effects, of both articles and experiments, between the journals in the sample. Thus, overall, 24.5% of the significance levels reported were accompanied by an effect size. Table 3 presents the distribution of the experimental effects in the various journals according to their reported levels of significance, whilst Table 4 shows the distribution of reported ω^2 values.

It can be seen from Table 4 that the majority (60.8%) of the reported ω^2 values fall between 0.01 and 0.09. A little more than 5% of the reported ω^2 values are less than 0.01, which, according to Cohen, renders them of no real effect. Large ω^2 values, of not less than 0.3, constitute a relatively small percentage. Following Cohen's suggested categorization of ω^2 values into 'small', 'medium' and 'large' effects, the distribution of the ω^2 values can be seen in Table 5.

It can also be seen that the 'small effects' category forms the majority (40.63%) of the ω^2 values reported, with 5% of these values having no experimental effect of importance. The average of these 352 ω^2 values is 0.102, with a standard deviation of 0.109.

Estimating ω^2 values from articles and experiments that do not report ω^2

There were 1,047 experimental effects for which ω^2 were not reported. Table 6 shows the distribution of these experimental

effects among the three types of statistical tests. Of the 1,047 experimental effects which did not report ω^2 , there was only sufficient information to compute 397 values of ω^2 . This amounts to only 37.92% of the reported experimental effects. The distribution of these estimated ω^2 values, computed from test statistics t and F between, first, the journals and then the test statistics, are shown in Tables 6 and 7. Note that Chi-squared tests were not included because no formula to convert the χ^2 statistic into ω^2 values could be found.

It is useful to consider the ω^2 statistics for this group of effects according to Cohen's suggested categorization of effect size, as previously. This is shown in Table 9, which (as in the previous case) shows the majority of unreported effect size values fall into the category of 'small effects'. The mean of the estimated ω^2 value is 0.11 and the standard deviation is 0.13. The aggregate mean of all the effect sizes as measured by both reported and estimated ω^2 values is also 0.11.

Distribution of experimental effects measured by Pearson's r

The second measure of effect size used was Pearson's r . It was found that 3.79% of the effect size values based on Pearson's r are less than 0.1 and so can be considered as having no effect at all. 49.61% of the effect size values fall under the range of 'small effect,' while 13.81% belong to the 'large' effect category. Distributions between journals and by effect size are shown in Tables 10 and 11.

Distribution of experimental effects measured by Cohen's d

The third—and final—measure of effect size used was Cohen's d . The distribution of effect size values, as measured by d and shown

TABLE 4
Distribution of ω^2 values according to Cohen's categorization

Experimental Effect	Range of ω^2 values	Number of ω^2 values in range
None	$\omega^2 < 0.01^*$	19 (5.40%)
Small	$0.01 < \omega^2 < 0.06$	143 (40.63%)
Medium	$0.06 < \omega^2 < 0.15$	111 (31.53%)
Large	$\omega^2 > 0.15$	79 (22.44%)
Total		352 (100.00%)

*The 'no effect' category is assumed by default.

TABLE 5
Distribution of reported ω^2 for experimental effects

Journal	Reported ω^2 Values						Total
	<0.00 9	0.01- 0.09	0.10- 0.19	0.20- 0.29	0.30- 0.39	>0.40	
Journal of Marketing	3	7	1	1	0	1	13
Journal of Marketing Research	0	55	13	7	1	0	76
Journal of Advertising Research	7	16	8	4	4	5	44
Journal of Consumer Research	9	136	42	16	12	4	219
Total (%)	19 (5.40)	214 (60.8)	64 (18.18)	28 (7.95)	17 (4.83)	10 (2.84)	352 (100)

TABLE 6
Distribution of experimental effects which did not report ω^2

Journal	Types of Test			Total
	By χ^2 -test	By <i>t</i> -test	By <i>F</i> -test	
Journal of Marketing	2	41	56	99
Journal of Marketing Research	17	109	123	249
Journal of Advertising Research	11	15	60	86
Journal of Consumer Research	34	155	424	613
Total	64	320	663	1047

TABLE 7
Distribution of estimated ω^2 between journals

Journal	Estimated ω^2 Values						Total
	0.009 or less	0.01- 0.09	0.10- 0.19	0.20- 0.29	0.30- 0.39	0.40+	
Journal of Marketing	10	40	1	0	0	1	52
Journal of Marketing Research	7	62	33	12	7	2	123
Journal of Advertising Research	5	15	5	2	1	0	28
Journal of Consumer Research	6	106	49	19	10	11	201
Total (%)	28 (6.93)	223 (55.2)	88 (21.78)	33 (8.17)	18 (4.46)	14 (3.47)	404 (100)

TABLE 8
Distribution of estimated ω^2 among test statistics

Test Statistics	Estimated ω^2 Values						Total
	0.009 or less	0.01-0.09	0.10-0.19	0.20-0.29	0.30-0.39	0.40 or more	
F-test	9	44	9	2	2	4	70
t-test	19	179	79	31	16	10	334
Total (%)	28 (6.93)	223 (55.2)	88 (21.78)	33 (8.17)	18 (4.46)	14 (3.47)	404 (100)

TABLE 9
Distribution of estimated ω^2 values according to Cohen's categorization

Effect	Range of ω^2	Number of ω^2
None*	$\omega^2 < 0.01^*$	28 (6.93%)
Small	$0.01 < \omega^2 < 0.06$	154 (38.12%)
Medium	$0.06 < \omega^2 < 0.15$	124 (30.69%)
Large	$\omega^2 > 0.15$	98 (24.27%)
Total		404 (100.00%)

*This particular category is assumed by default

TABLE 10
Distribution of estimated r between journals

Journal	Estimated r Values				Total
	0.10 or less	0.10-0.29 (Small)	0.20-0.49 (Medium)	0.50 or more (Large)	
Journal of Marketing	14	66	13	1	94
Journal of Marketing Research	7	109	89	44	249
Journal of Advertising Research	12	40	22	4	78
Journal of Consumer Research	6	295	213	93	607
Total (%)	39 (3.79)	510 (49.61)	337 (32.78)	142 (13.81)	1028 (100.00)

TABLE 11
Distribution of estimated r between test statistics

Test Statistic	Estimated r Values				Total
	0.10 or less (None)	0.10-0.29 (Small)	0.20-0.49 (Medium)	0.50 or more (Large)	
χ^2 -test	2	36	21	5	64
F-test	22	314	201	93	630
t-test	15	160	115	44	334
Total (%)	39 (3.79)	510 (49.61)	337 (32.78)	142 (13.81)	1028 (100.00)

TABLE 12
Distribution of estimated Cohen's d between journals

Journal	Estimated d Values				Total
	0.20 or less	0.20- 0.49 Small	0.50- 0.79 Medium	0.80 or more Large	
Journal of Marketing	14	48	23	7	92
Journal of Marketing Research	5	68	68	91	232
Journal of Advertising Research	23	34	11	11	79
Journal of Consumer Research	6	183	181	203	573
Total (%)	48 (4.92)	333 (34.12)	283 (29.00)	312 (31.97)	976 (100.00)

TABLE 13
Distribution of estimated d between test statistics

Test Statistic	Estimated d Values				Total
	0.20 or less (None)	0.20- 0.49 (Small)	0.50- 0.79 (Medium)	0.80 or more Large	
t -test	15	103	109	107	334
F -test	33	230	174	205	642
Total	48 (4.92)	333 (34.12)	283 (29.00)	312 (31.97)	976 (100.00)

*Chi-squared test was not included because there was no equation found to convert chi-squared values into d values.

in Tables 12 and 13, is not as varied as was the case for ω^2 and r ; the majority of the d values still fall within the category of 'small effect', however. There is, once again, a small number of effect size estimates that are so small as to be negligible (4.92%).

Relationship between ω^2 and r^2

Corresponding values of both ω^2 and r^2 from the same experiments were used to examine this relationship between these two measures of effect size. Regression analysis yields information about a close relationship; $r^2=0.94$ ($F=20920.90$, $p<0.001$). Furthermore, the calculated effect size, based on ω^2 , is very large ($\omega^2=0.98$).

DISCUSSION

General level of effect size reporting

About one quarter (24.54%) of the experiments studied reported ω^2 . There are several possible reasons for not reporting effect size. Clearly, some test statistics employed by researchers may not allow for the use of ω^2 as a measure of effect size. There are also other measures of effect sizes besides ω^2 which might have been used. Nevertheless, it is tempting to speculate that ω^2 values may go unreported because of their small values. Researchers may be unwilling to disclose these small effect sizes as they will show highly significant results to be significant only because of the large sample size of the studies. In fact, this supposition is not born out

here, as the incidence of no, small, medium and large effect sizes is very similar between those experiments reporting effect sizes and those not (see Tables 4 and 9). The fairly low rate at which ω^2 values are being reported could also be indicative of ignorance, a general lack of interest in discovering the extent to which an effect is significant or a genuine belief that only the existence of an experimental effect is important, no matter what its size.

For all this, the present study has at least found an increase in the number of experiments that report ω^2 since the 1985 study conducted by Peterson *et al.* Only 14.4% of the total experiments studied in the period between 1970 and 1982 reported ω^2 values, while 24.63% of the experiments we studied reported ω^2 . This suggests an increasing awareness of the importance of effect sizes as a complement to the traditional statistical tests of significance and the possibility that the PAB paper had an impact.

Cohen's Categorization of effect size

An analysis of the distribution of ω^2 values among the 'small', 'medium' and 'large' effect categories provides an insight into the nature of consumer behavior experiments. The results reported above are consistent with the opinion that effect sizes reported in consumer behavior experiments are usually quite small. The majority (60.80%) of reported ω^2 values documented here fall between the range of 0.01 to 0.09, while less than 10% of the experimental effects have values greater than 0.3. This could be attributed to the

fact that many of these studies are subject to unidentified and uncontrollable effects or, more simply, that the social science view that explaining even a very small part of a human's behavior is very difficult (but, nonetheless, worthy). The mean value of ω^2 in the work considered is 0.102, with a standard deviation of 0.109. This means that, on the average, the value of ω^2 for a given experimental effect in the consumer behavior literature is about 10%. This confirms what was earlier mentioned about effect sizes being generally small for behavioral experiments. 5.4% of reported ω^2 values reported here were 0.009 or less. This small number of studies poses a problem because it could be that the reporting of these insignificant effects would not serve to enhance the quality of the report but rather would reduce the credibility of the study.

Articles and experiments that do not report ω^2

The majority (55.2%) of the estimated ω^2 values fall between the range of 0.01 and 0.09 as expected. The calculated mean value of ω^2 is 0.11 with a standard deviation of 0.13. This is very close to the mean value of significant effects (0.107) calculated in the study conducted by Peterson *et al* (1985).

All three measures of effect size consistently reveal a small percentage of the experimental effects to be insignificant. Although this percentage is quite small (ranging from 3.79% to 6.13%), it should be noted that this percentage is taken out of experimental effects that do report statistically significant results from various statistical tests (e.g. *F*-tests, *t*-tests or χ^2 tests). There is a clear message here, though, for the reviewers of marketing journals.

Relationship Between ω^2 and r^2

The results here do show that ω^2 and r^2 indeed have a strong linear relationship. However, it was found that ω^2 was consistently less than r^2 by 6%, rather than the 20-25% reported by Oakes (1986). This is rather important, as the consistency of the relationship would otherwise make it possible to estimate values of ω^2 given the values of ω^2 and r^2 , and vice versa.

A possible reason for the discrepancy between this study and Oakes (1986) may lie in the fact that while r^2 can measure the proportion of the total variance explained by an experimental effect only if there is a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables, ω^2 is not subject to the same limitation. Suppose there is no evidence of linearity between the independent and dependent variable, r^2 will be less accurate (compared to ω^2) in measuring the proportion of the total variance that is explained by the experimental effect. Therefore, the similarity between ω^2 and r^2 may be affected by the presence (or even the strength) of linearity between the dependent variables and the independent variables in the experiments.

Further research

There are several questions left begging by this study, which leaves the way for others to continue to expand the research. One such avenue follows immediately from the comments above. An investigation of how the strength and presence of linearity between the independent and dependent variables of an experiment affect the presence (as well as strength) of linearity between corresponding values of ω^2 and r^2 would clearly provide an interesting research study.

A second challenge lies with the sample bias problem. Of the 1,399 experimental effects considered here, more than half (59.47%) were taken from the Journal of Consumer Research. Whilst it is true that the nature and focus of this journal centres on consumer behaviour research, there still seems some justification for a claim of sample bias. As is so often the case with longitudinal studies of

this type, a problem arises because precise replication of an original study may ignore other, emerging journals. Further research, then, to cope with publication bias more rigorously and to expand the work to other journals, would be of value.

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Social Hubs: A Valuable Segmentation Construct in the Word-of-Mouth Consumer Network

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

As marketers reflecting on word-of-mouth (WOM), we consider highly involved experts including *opinion leaders* and *market mavens* (Childers 1986; Feick and Price 1987) as key segmentation constructs in identifying those consumers who are responsible for the dissemination of marketplace information. But there is another class of consumers that is at least as influential in this domain that is not yet on marketers' radar screens. These are the consumers who direct social traffic—we will call these consumers "social hubs." Social hubs provide access to a large number and broad variety of consumers. The objective of this research is to introduce these social hubs.

There are three elements included in the proposed literary definition of a social hub. Social hubs:

1. have relationships with many people;
2. frequently connect these people together; and
3. do so for personal pleasure, as opposed to some tangible reward.

A summary of the propositions for social hubs is as follows:

P1: The social hub scale questions will be positively correlated with the name recognition exercise, but the *survey scale will be optimal* in identifying social hubs.

P2: The social hub construct will be positively correlated with the *market maven* and *opinion leader* constructs, but will also have distinct characteristics from these constructs.

P3: Social hubs are *not* identifiable in terms of *demographics*.

P4: Social hubs are *extroverts*.

P5: In comparing the opinion leadership and the social hub scales, the opinion leadership scale is a better predictor of the *likelihood* of engaging in WOM, while the social hub scale is a better predictor of the *number* of people told.

Method and Topline Results—Study One

Six final questions were determined to best represent the social hub construct:

1. I very much enjoy learning new things about different people. (5-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*)
2. I very much enjoy meeting new people.
3. Compared to other people, I am very friendly.
4. I go out of my way to introduce people to each other.
5. I enjoy participating in small talk.
6. Compared to other people, I have (*far fewer* to *far more*) friends and acquaintances.

These final questions were incorporated into a large online survey commissioned by a "Fortune 50" firm. Compensation in the form of a modest cash sweepstakes encouraged participation and 6,530 members of a paneling firm completed the survey. The final survey included the above questions, the opinion leadership and market maven scales (Childers 1986, Feick and Price 1987), as well as Gladwell's exercise and several other trait items.

For the social hub scale questions, Cronbach's alpha of .85 indicates appropriate internal validity. Principle component analysis established discriminant validity as well as correlations with the market maven ($r=.38$), and opinion leader components (at $r=.20-.22$, $p<.001$ for all).

A second potential method of identifying social hubs adapted from Gladwell (2001) was also considered. For this method, 100 randomly generated surnames from a local telephone book were listed in the survey, and subjects were asked, "From this list of 100 names, please check those that are shared by someone you know." The dependent variable was the total number of names recognized by each subject. Results ranged from zero to 87, with a mean of 12.0.

The correlation between the scale questions and the name recognition exercise is significant due to the large sample size ($p<.001$), but the effect size is marginal ($r=.18$). Of the three elements comprising the literary definition of social hubs, both the scale questions and the name recognition exercise address the first element. The second element is directly addressed with the scale while it is not addressed by the name recognition exercise, providing some support for proposition 1.

Proposition 2, that the social hub construct is positively correlated with the opinion leader and market maven constructs, was established via principle component analysis and component correlations.

Most demographic and media habit indicators have low correlations with the scale and the name recognition exercise and do not warrant serious consideration as indicators of this new construct. However results indicate that the social hub scale is correlated with the psychographic constructs of *extroversion* ($r=.52$) and *altruism*, the third element of the literary definition ($r=.39$, $p<.001$ for both). Given these analyses, it is concluded that the social hub scale is successful in establishing the first four propositions.

Method and Results—Second Study

An invitation to participate in this experiment was posted on a website for members of a university subject pool. Subjects who completed the experiment ($N=179$) were mailed a five-dollar money order.

At the beginning of the survey, a restaurant consumption scenario was described. Subjects were then asked how likely they would be to tell someone about this restaurant and how many people would you tell, followed by the social hub and opinion leadership scale questions.

To address proposition 5, low, medium, and high segments were created for each of the two scales, with medium defined as being within one standard deviation of the mean. Considering the dependent variable of the *number* of people you would tell, high social hubs would tell significantly more people ($+3.3$, $p=.003$) than low social hubs. However, this difference is not significant for opinion leaders. Therefore, proposition 5 is supported.

Summary

The objective of this research was to identify social hubs. Based on the literary definition, results indicate that a new six-item unidimensional scale is a viable method of identifying social hubs and that social hubs are correlated with but sufficiently distinct from opinion leaders and market mavens.

The value of social hubs in the consumer network was highlighted with the social hub scale being established as a superior

predictor of the number of people told about a consumption experience. This result exemplifies the significance of these social hubs in the marketplace, who can ultimately provide marketers with access to many consumers.

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The Interaction between Order of Elicitation and Event Controllability on the Self-Positivity Bias

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the underlying reason behind the self-positivity bias. As events perceived to be controllable implicate self-esteem more so than less controllable ones, they are more prone to self-positivity effects. On the other hand, as less controllable events do not implicate self-esteem, only when the order-of-elicitation cues comparative (versus absolute) judgments about the self, does the self-positivity effect emerge. When information about "self" is asked first, the bias is attenuated, but when others' estimates are elicited prior to self-estimates, the bias re-emerges even for uncontrollable events. Implications for health marketing are offered.

Across a range of domains, people judge that they are less at risk of a negative event than the general population: "self-positivity" (Perloff and Fetzer 1986), and have a greater likelihood of a positive event occurring than the average person: "unrealistic optimism" (Weinstein 1980). Consumer researchers are increasingly examining self-positivity effects in people's perceptions of own risk in contexts ranging from AIDS (Raghurir and Menon 1998) and breast cancer (Luce and Kahn 1999) to Hepatitis C (Menon, Block and Ramanathan 2002) and depression (Keller, Lipkus, and Rimer 2002). As reducing the self-positivity bias can favorably affect preventative action, an important consumer welfare goal is to reduce the self-positivity bias.

Prior research has shown mixed effects regarding key moderators of the self-positivity bias: the perceived controllability of the event, and contextual cues (Helweg-Larsen and Shepperd 2001). Specifically, while the bias has been found to be strong for events perceived to be controllable, there are mixed results for events that are perceived to be uncontrollable (Harris 1996). Context effects, such as order-of-elicitation, have been found by some researchers who demonstrated a stronger self-positivity bias when estimates of an average person were elicited prior to self-estimates (Hoorens and Buunk 1993), though this effect was difficult to replicate (Otten and van der Pligt 1996).

This paper examines the interactive effects of order-of-elicitation of self- and other- estimates of risk, and perceived controllability of an event, on the self-positivity bias. As events perceived to be controllable implicate self-esteem more so than less controllable ones, they are more prone to self-positivity effects (Weinstein 1980, Lin, Lin, and Raghurir 2003). On the other hand, we argue that as less controllable events do not implicate self-esteem, only when the order-of-elicitation cues comparative (versus absolute) judgments about the self, does the self-positivity effect emerge. When information about "self" is asked first, the bias is attenuated, but when others' estimates are elicited prior to self-estimates, the bias re-emerges even for uncontrollable events. This is because the "other-first" order condition, changes the default "self as standard" to an artificial "other as standard." When the standard of comparison is an "other" person, then even though the events are not within an individual's control (and do not implicate self-esteem), the process of comparison leads to self-enhancement, and the re-emergence of the self-positivity bias. This paper reconciles conflicting findings

regarding controllability, and order-of-elicitation and suggests that the underlying cause of self-positivity is to enhance self-esteem. Implications for health marketing are offered.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Self-Positivity Bias. The tendency for self-enhancement is well documented in the domain of positive and negative events (Weinstein 1980), and, has, in fact shown to serve a functional purpose (Taylor and Brown 1988). There is ample evidence that people underestimate their own health risks as compared to the risks they attribute to others and this leads to unsafe health-related behaviors (Lin et al. 2003, Menon et al. 2002, Perloff and Fetzer 1986, Raghurir and Menon 1998).

H1: The Self-Positivity Bias: Estimates for self will be higher than those of others for positive events and lower than those of others for negative events.

The Moderating Effect of Perceived Controllability. Weinstein (1980) conjectured that "the greater the perceived controllability of a negative event, the greater the tendency for people to believe that their own chances are less than average; the greater the perceived controllability of a positive event, the greater the tendency for people to believe that their own chances are greater than average" (p. 808). This is because people should strategically use the mechanism of believing that they are less at risk than others, if they can attribute this lower risk to their own actions. Therefore, the more controllable that an event is perceived to be the more possible it is that self-positivity beliefs will improve a person's self-esteem. Weinstein (1980) showed that in the domain of negative events, the more controllable the event, the greater the bias (Harris 1996; Helweg-Larsen and Shepperd 2001). However, this relationship was not found for positively valenced events, and the evidence linking controllability and the optimism bias for positive events remains mixed (Harris 1996). It is possible that this may be due to differences in controllability in the events used to test positive and negative events (with negative events perceived to be more controllable, due to an overall optimism bias). In this study, we examine the effect of controllability for positive and negative events and predict:

H2: The self-positivity bias will be stronger the more controllable an event.

Order Effects. Order-of-elicitation is a well-researched contextual cue in behavioral frequency and attitude judgments. One of the routes through which order affects judgments is that responses to a prior question are used to construct a later judgment particularly when people do not have well-formed memory-based information that they may use instead (Raghurir and Johar 1999). Prior literature has found inconsistent effects of order on the self-positivity bias. Hoorens and Buunk (1993) found that the bias was stronger when others' estimates were elicited first,² while Perloff and Fetzer (1986) did not.³

²Alcoholism, AIDS, heart attack, cancer, and suicide.

³Hypertension, cancer, heart attack, alcoholism, divorce, venereal disease, and being mugged; no self-positivity effect for car accident, nervous breakdown, and diabetes.

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In an attempt to explain these inconsistent effects, Otten and van der Pligt (1996) suggested that these effects are due to whether the “self” or the “other” is used as a comparison standard. They argue that the self is a habitual reference point with a rich representation and unique features. Eliciting others’ estimates prior to self-estimates leads to an “others as standard” perspective, and cues comparative processing: *i.e.*, self-estimates reflect estimates relative to others. On the other hand, eliciting self-estimates prior to others’ estimates leads to the “self as standard” perspective where judgments about oneself are based on absolute judgments of risk. Consistent with this argument, they show that the self-positivity bias is greater when comparative estimates are elicited directly (*e.g.*, “How much are you at risk compared to an average person?”) rather than indirectly (*e.g.*, elicitation of separate estimates of risk for an individual and an other person). They found evidence for order effects with indirect comparisons (Study 1), but not when relative estimates were elicited (Study 2). In a similar vein, Raghurir and Menon (1998) also showed that when contextual cues increased the salience of memory-based information about oneself (similar to the use of self as standard), the self-positivity bias was attenuated.

We now suggest that perceived controllability moderates the effect of order. We propose that when events are perceived to be controllable, individuals are motivated to enhance their self-esteem irrespective of the order-of-elicitation, and therefore, the self-positivity bias will be robust. When events are less controllable, however, the self-positivity bias should be contingent on the order of elicitation of self-other risk estimates. It may not be present when people are using the “self as standard”—*i.e.*, when self-estimates are elicited prior to others’ estimates. Self-positivity would be stronger when people make comparative judgments: when the “other person” is a standard of reference, *i.e.*, when others’ estimates are elicited prior to self-estimates.

- H3: Order will not affect the self-positivity bias for controllable events, but for less controllable events, the self-positivity bias will be stronger when others’ estimates are elicited prior to self-estimates.

STUDY METHOD

Study Participants. Six hundred and twenty one undergraduate students from Taiwan participated in this study. They were assigned at random to one of the eight between-subjects conditions. Due to partial non-response, the usable sample size was 606 (Males=330, females=276).

Design: We used a 4 (target person: self=S, same-sex best friend=F, average undergraduate=UG, and average person=AP) x 2 (event outcome: positive vs. negative) x 2 (degree of controllability: Low vs. high) x 2 (order: Self first, Average person first) mixed design, with the target person manipulated within-subjects, and the remaining factors manipulated between subjects. The four events were chosen on the basis of a pilot test ($n=40$) that showed that marriage and divorce were perceived to be more controllable than getting cancer and winning the lottery. In the “self first” condition, subjects rated their own risk followed by F, UG and AP (as in Raghurir and Menon, 1998). In the “average person first” condition, the order was reversed.

Study Procedure. Participants were assigned at random to one of the 8 (4 events x 2 order) conditions. After a brief introduction to the study, stating that it was related to prospects of life events among undergraduates, participants estimated the likelihood of an event occurring in the future from 0 to 100 for each of the four targets: S, F, UG and AP.

Manipulation Checks. Each individual rated the similarity of the 3 different targets from 0 to 100, with higher numbers indicating

greater similarity. Perceived controllability was measured using a 7-point rating scale (Not at all/ Very under my control). The questionnaire ended with a range of demographic and other questions, after which participants were debriefed, thanked, and dismissed.

RESULTS

Manipulation Checks-Similarity. Overall, the friend was rated as most similar to oneself ($M=50.39$), followed by the UG ($M=43.34$), with the AP rated the least similar ($M=37.43$; target effect: $F(2, 1208)=99.427, p<0.001$). The 3 (target other) x 2 (order of elicitation) repeated-measures ANOVA revealed a main effect of order ($F(1, 604)=11.517, p<0.001$), while the interaction effect was not significant ($p>0.1$). Given the significant order effect, we confirmed that the manipulation was significant in both order conditions (both p 's <0.01).

Controllability. As desired, getting divorced was perceived to be more controllable than getting cancer in the domain of negative events ($M_s=4.97$ vs. 3.91 ; $F=(1, 304)=7.88, p<0.0001$), and having a happy marriage was perceived to be more controllable than winning a lottery in the domain of positive events ($M_s=4.83$ vs. 1.9 ; $F=(1, 298)=3.00, p<0.0001$).

Overall Analysis. We used a 4 (target person) x 2 (event outcome) x 2 (degree of controllability) x 2 (order) ANOVA to test our hypotheses. Complete ANOVA results are provided in Table 1. Predicted effects are analyzed below. As per H1, there was an overall main effect of target person ($F(3, 1797)=8.04, p<0.0001$). The effect of target interacted with degree of controllability ($F(3, 1797)=23.17, p<0.001$) as predicted by H2. A significant 3-way interaction between target, valence and controllability, suggests that the self-positivity bias may be different for each of the four events ($F(3, 1797)=42.40, p<0.001$). Finally, as predicted by H3, this three-way interaction was itself contingent on the order in which judgments were elicited ($F(3, 1797)=5.37, p<0.01$). Means, by condition, are presented in Table 2, and depicted graphically in Figure 1. Below, we analyze the means to test H1-H3.

H1 predicted that estimates for negative (positive) events would be lowest (highest) for one’s self, while H2 predicted that this pattern would be stronger for the more controllable events of “happy marriage” and “divorce” and weaker for the less controllable events of “cancer” and “lottery.” Given the target x valence x controllability interaction, we examine the pattern of self-positivity for each of the four events.

Happy Marriage. The main effect of target was significant for estimates of a happy marriage ($F(3, 152)=66.11, p<0.001$). These were the highest for one’s self ($M=71.59$), and were followed by one’s best friend ($M=63.67$), UG ($M=54.32$), with the lowest estimate for AP ($M=48.74$, all means significantly different from each other at $p<0.05$).

Divorce. Similarly, estimates for divorce were the lowest for one’s self ($M=24.73$), and were followed by the three other targets ($M_F=29.48, M_{AP}=39.25, M_{UG}=44.43$, all means different from each other at $p<0.05$; $F(3, 152)=33.96, p<0.001$).

Cancer. Mean estimates for contracting cancer were lowest for one’s friend ($M=20.69$). These estimates were significantly lower than the other three estimates: ($M_S=25.44, M_{UG}=26.17, M_{AP}=34.78$; target: $F(3, 149)=24.02, p<0.001$). AP estimates were higher than the other three estimates, but F and UG estimates were not different from each other.

Lottery. The only event where self-positivity was not observed was the lowest perceived control event: winning a lottery. Estimates for winning a lottery were no different for one’s friend ($M=14.76$), oneself ($M=15.88$) and UG ($M=18.11$), which were all

TABLE 1
Analysis of Variance Results for Study 1

Factor	Omnibus: Overall Between-Subjects F (1, 599) ¹	Individual Analysis Between-Subjects F (1, 599)			
		Self	Friend	Undergrad	Person
Valence	31.994	76.142	56.698	0.164	0.121
Control	290.986	166.2	243.144	251.409	66.021
Order	32.588	6.977	16.675	36.208	26.984
Valence x Control	141.243	179.724	120.996	29.201	32.685
Valence x Order	0.114	4.634	0.283	0.942	1.174
Control x Order	4.676	2.819	4.484	1.617	2.386
Valence x Control x Order	1.015	6.032	1.728	0.139	1.948
	Within-Subjects F (3, 1797)				
Target	8.044				
Target x Valence	46.891				
Target x Control	23.167				
Target x Order	2.245				
Target x Valence x Control	42.399				
Target x Valence x Order	4.707				
Target x Control x Order	0.312				
Target x Valence x Control x Order	5.371				

1: Effects in bold are significant at $p < .05$.

lower than the AP's estimates ($M=24.50$; $p's < 0.05$: Target: $F(3, 142)=4.99$, $p < 0.01$), reflecting self-negativity.

To summarize, as predicted by H2, for the two controllable events, we observed patterns of self-positivity (H1), but these patterns were weaker for the less controllable events. For "contracting cancer," we observed self-positivity only against unknown targets. For "winning the lottery," we found no evidence for self-positivity. The reason for this is analyzed *post hoc* below.

H3: Order Effects. H3 argued that order effects would emerge for uncontrollable event with the self-positivity effects stronger when other estimates were elicited first. This is because eliciting others' estimates changes the default "self as standard" judgment process where judgments are based on absolute estimates of risk, to an "other as standard" process, where judgments are based on relative judgments of risk. To test H3, we conducted 4 (target) x 2 (order) ANOVAs for each of the four events. Means for both order conditions across the four targets for each of the four events are provided in Table 2, and followed by ANOVA results. These results show a straight replication of self-positivity in both the order conditions for the two controllable behaviors (Target effect: $F(3, 459)=45.23$ and 65.73 for "divorce" and "happy marriage" respectively, both $p's < 0.01$, also see Figure 1). Self-estimates do not differ as a function of the order in which they are elicited ($M_s=25.42$ and

24.03 for "divorce" and 72.96 and 70.28 for "happy marriage" in the self-first and other-first conditions respectively; see Figure 1). They reflect positivity versus the UG and AP (both contrasts are significant for negative and positive events in both order conditions, $p's < .05$). Importantly, order-of-elicitation does not interact with the target factor, suggesting that the strength and direction of self-positivity does not differ depending on the order in which estimates are elicited.

On the other hand, for the less controllable events, a complex pattern emerges. As predicted by H3, the main effect of target, while significant, is contingent on order (interaction $F(3, 459)=4.76$ and 4.21 for "cancer" and "winning the lottery" respectively, both $p's < 0.01$). The first estimate elicited is the same in the two order conditions, irrespective of whether it is an estimate for one's self or for the AP (cancer $M=35.27$ vs. 31.13 and Lottery $M=15.59$ vs. 15.88 for self versus AP respectively). For "cancer," self-estimates are significantly higher when they are elicited first: the "self as standard" condition ($M=35.27$) versus last when the "other" is a standard of reference ($M=16.35$). This eliminates the self-positivity bias in the self-first condition where estimates are based on absolute rather than comparative judgments of risk.

Post Hoc Analysis of Lottery. As a self-negativity effect was not predicted for the positive-uncontrollable behavior ("winning

TABLE 2
Means by Condition: Study 1

	Negative Events		Positive Events	
	High control (DIVORCE)	Low control (CANCER)	High control (HAPPY MARRIAGE)	Low control (LOTTERY)
Overall: Across Both Orders¹				
SELF	24.73 ^a	25.44 ^b	71.59 ^d	15.88 ^a
BEST FRIEND	29.48 ^b	20.69 ^a	63.67 ^c	14.76 ^a
UNDERGRAD	44.43 ^d	26.17 ^b	54.32 ^b	18.11 ^a
AVG PERSON	39.25 ^c	34.78 ^c	48.74 ^a	24.50 ^b
Order: Self First¹				
SELF	25.42 ^a	35.27 ^b	72.96 ^d	15.59 ^a
BEST FRIEND	30.56 ^b	28.42 ^a	66.26 ^c	18.59 ^a
UNDERGRAD	47.35 ^d	32.16 ^b	59.67 ^b	24.58 ^b
AVG PERSON	42.76 ^c	38.73 ^b	51.78 ^a	32.33 ^c
Correlation: Self-AP	.387	.585	.295	.019
Order: Average Person First¹				
SELF	24.03 ^a	16.35 ^b	70.28 ^c	16.20 ^{ab}
BEST FRIEND	28.38 ^a	13.54 ^a	61.18 ^b	10.54 ^a
UNDERGRAD	41.48 ^c	20.63 ^c	49.18 ^a	10.99 ^{ab}
AVG PERSON	35.69 ^b	31.13 ^d	45.82 ^a	15.88 ^b
Correlation: Self-AP	.290	.604	.301	.142
Results (F statistics) of 4 (Target) x 2 (Order) ANOVA for each event ² .				
TARGET	45.23	27.59	65.73	5.33
ORDER	2.24	16.62	6.18	9.71
TARGETXORDER	1.07	4.76	1.73	4.21

¹Means that do not share a common subscript within a column, within a group, are significantly different from each other at $p < .05$ using directional tests.

²Numbers in bold are significant at $p < .05$.

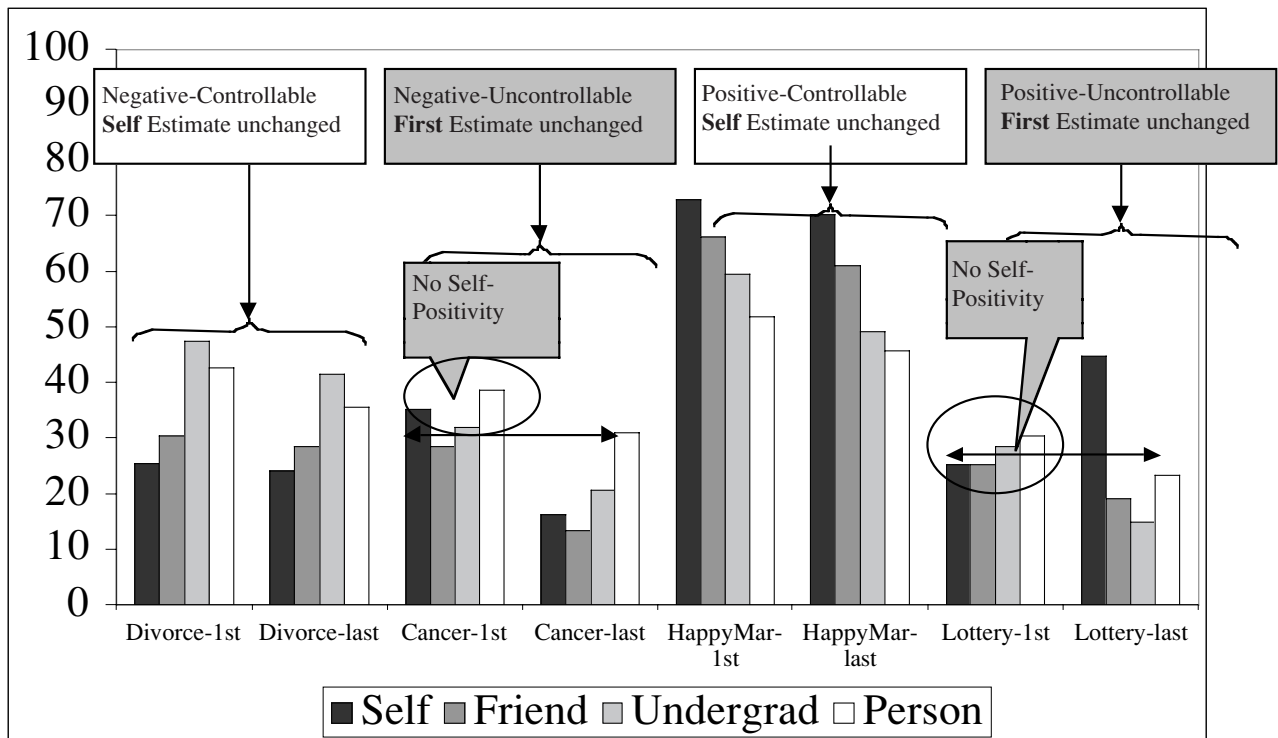
the lottery”), we examined whether this effect was contingent on an individual’s absolute level of self-estimate. To assess this possibility, we did a median split of people’s self-estimates for winning the lottery. Half ($n=73$) of the respondents reported a 0 likelihood of winning the lottery, whereas the other half ($n=72$), reported a mean self-likelihood=31.99. A 4 (target) x 2 (order) x 2 (self-estimate: low/ high) ANOVA revealed a three-way interaction ($F(3, 423)=3.08, p < .05$). Those individuals who estimated their own likelihood of winning the lottery as 0, showed self-negativity effects irrespective of whether the self-estimates were elicited first

($M_s=7.84, 18.34, \text{ and } 35.21$ for F, UG, and AP respectively, all means significantly different from each other at $p < .05$) or whether self-estimates were elicited last ($M_s=5.64, 8.70, \text{ and } 11.66$ for F, UG, and AP respectively, with estimates for UG directionally different from F and AP, but other means different at $p < .05$).

On the other hand, those who estimated that they had a non-zero likelihood of winning the lottery, were prone to self-positivity effects when other estimates were asked first: the “other as standard” condition cuing comparative judgments ($M_s=44.72, 19.18, 15.00, \text{ and } 23.32$ for S, F, UG, and AP respectively, with self

FIGURE 1

Study 1 Results: Order of elicitation (Self First or Self Last) affects self judgments only for less controllable events (Lottery Data is shown for those who estimated non-zero probability of winning)



estimates higher than those of the remaining three targets at $p < .05$). However, when self-estimates were elicited first (“self as standard”), estimates did not differ across the four targets ($M_s = 25.21, 25.22, 28.43, \text{ and } 30.55$ for S, F, UG, and AP respectively). Note how the self-positivity pattern is stronger when other estimates are elicited first (“other as standard”), similar to the results for cancer (see Figure 1, for the means for those who estimated a non-zero probability of winning the lottery).

DISCUSSION

To summarize, results replicate the self-positivity bias in the domain of controllable events for both positive and negative events. Manipulations of the order in which estimates were elicited showed that in the high-controllability events, the bias was robust to order-of-elicitation. However, when events are less controllable, then respondents are less likely to show self-positivity, unless their frame of reference is “other focused,” leading to comparative judgments.

Theoretical Contributions. A primary contribution of this paper is to demonstrate that under conditions where individuals are motivated to maintain or enhance their self-esteem (controllable events), self-estimates of likelihood are obdurate for both negative and positive events. A parsimonious explanation for the pattern of results is that self-positivity is a strategic device that people use to maintain or enhance their self-esteem.

The relationship between perceived controllability and self-positivity bias may have important theoretical and practical implication (Harris 1996). Self-positivity due to perceived controllability may be psychologically advantageous, promoting positive mental health (Taylor and Brown 1988). On the other hand, exaggerated control perceptions, may themselves have negative consequences

(Skinner 1995), such as complacency, rather than effective goal-relevant behavior (Weinstein 1989). Either way, the propensity to perceive events to be controllable may make it one of the more pervasive causes of optimistic bias. This suggests that the bias may be related to the illusion of control and over-confidence, an area we offer for future research. Practically, it may be difficult to successfully challenge optimistic expectations rooted in powerfully held individual’s control beliefs, even when it is desirable to do so (Harris 1996).

Are Self or Other Estimates more tensile? Prior literature has shown that self-perceptions of risk are more amenable to change than perceptions of others’ risk as a function of contextual cues, such as the accessibility of AIDS-related behaviors (Raghubir and Menon 1998), and the number and type of Hepatitis C behaviors presented in an advertisement (Menon et al. 2002). Our study found that for less controllable events, self-judgments, when elicited first were similar to other-judgments when those were elicited first and, were accordingly, different from self-estimates when those were elicited last. Our results show that self-estimates were more tensile than others’ estimates. Identifying the conditions under which self-estimates are robust, and others-estimates are tensile are offered as an area for future research.

Cross-Cultural Issues. Cross-cultural variations in self-positivity have been noted. This paper replicated the self-positivity bias in a country with a “collectivist” orientation: Taiwan (Hofstede 1990), suggesting that even if it is lower for people from a collectivist orientation (relative to an individualistic orientation), it remains significant. Heine and Lehman (1995) showed that the belief that positive events are more likely to happen to one’s self (relative to one’s peer) was significantly reduced for Japanese relative to Canadian individuals. Similarly, Chang (1996) found that across

multiple measures, Chinese individuals were more pessimistic than were their American peers. However, Sedikides, Gaertner, and Toguchi (2003) have recently suggested that self-positivity may be a universal phenomenon, but the domain in which it is seen may differ for those from individualistic versus collectivistic cultures.

Similarity Bias. Prior literature shows that people have a tendency to project information about themselves onto others because of the operation of the false consensus bias (Hoch 1988; Perloff and Brickman 1982). This leads them to believe that others behave in ways similar to themselves (Menon, Raghurib, and Schwarz 1995). Although previous research on the self-positivity bias has found a similarity bias, the findings of self-positivity bias between self and close friend (or parent and siblings) are mixed (Helweg-Larsen and Shepperd 2001). Perloff and Fetzer (1986) found subjects perceived a specific target (their closest friend, sibling, or same-sex parent) as equally invulnerable as themselves. However, others have found the self-positivity bias with respect to one's best friend (Menon et. al. 2002, Raghurib and Menon 1998). Perloff and Fetzer (1986) argue that when predictions were being made for vague targets (*i.e.*, the average undergraduate student), respondents chose a person who fit their stereotype of someone to whom the given event typically happens. This suggests that the bias could be stronger when there is an unknown (versus known) target used as a comparison other.

We found that while, on the whole, judgments were more positive for an other person the more similar the other person was to oneself, there were some divergences from this linear ordering. For example, the self-positivity bias in the divorce condition was not entirely inversely related to the similarity of another person to oneself. A possible explanation for our results was that our study was conducted with a sample from a collectivist country (Taiwan) where there exist strong cultural inhibitions against expressing a negative thought against a known and similar other person in one's peer group (Heine and Lehman 1995). However, alternative explanations involving cognitive factors (such as the presence of memory-based information about the best friend) are possible. Delineating the targets relative to which self-positivity will occur is an interesting area for future research.

Implications for Consumer Welfare. The self-positivity bias occurs for both positive and negative events (Weinstein 1980). If the self-positivity bias operates for low chance outcomes, such as winning a lottery, such people may consider themselves as "the lucky ones," overestimate the likelihood of pleasant outcomes and be more likely to over-spend on these products. Further, to the extent people have exaggerated views of their own invulnerability or positivity, they may be less likely to effectively deal with the occurrence of negative events, and the non-occurrence of positive ones. Self-positivity biases in personal risk perceptions are important because they may hinder efforts to promote risk-reducing behaviors (Raghurib and Menon, 1998, Menon et al. 2002). Our results suggest that making the self-as-standard along with highlighting the low controllability of an event can help attenuate the self-positivity bias.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The Impact on Preferences of Consumer Access to Information In Online Shopping Environments

Donna L. Hoffman, Vanderbilt University

SESSION OVERVIEW

The Internet makes available numerous information sources that consumers may draw on as they search for information and construct choices about commercial offerings. These information sources include online product reviews (either by peers or experts), and uncensored in-depth product information on a variety of Web sites, among many other sources.

Recently, consumer behavior researchers have begun a close examination of how certain characteristics of the different information sources consumers may access in online shopping environments impact consumer behavior. For example, scholars have investigated the role of electronic recommendation agents on preference construction (Häubl and Trifts 2000) and how consumer control over the flow of information online affects decision quality (Ariely 2000). It has also been demonstrated that compelling online experiences are created through information that strikes the right balance between engagement and effort (Novak, Hoffman, and Yung 2000). Other research has investigated the mechanisms by which Web site backgrounds influence product choice (Mandel and Johnson (2002), and the conditions under which online information interruptions may increase online activity (Xia and Sudharshan 2002). Turning the question around, Moon (2000) examined the factors that influence consumers to reveal information about themselves in online environments.

In this special session, three papers utilized rich theoretical frameworks to examine the impact on consumer preferences of specific information characteristics available in online shopping environments.

The paper by *Hoffman, Novak, and Wan* examined the impact of various information cues of online product reviews on consumer preference in an online retailing environment. In a series of online experiments, they manipulated consumer mindset, consumer purchasing goals, reviewer characteristics, and review characteristics. Results suggested that processing goals differentially affect the interaction between product review description and cue congruency.

Gershoff, Mukherjee and Mukhopadhyay argued that fundamental differences in depth and richness of preference structures for that which consumers love compared to hate or rate neutrally leads to differences in perceived diagnosticity of revealed preferences. Two of their studies showed that loved alternatives are perceived as more diagnostic than hated, and hated more than neutral, for agent prediction of own and others' future ratings and informativeness of tastes. A third study revealed that a prospective agent who agrees with a consumer on loved compared to hated, and hated compared to neutral alternatives, is more preferred, perceived as more similar, and less likely to have agreed by chance.

The last paper in the session was by *Trifts and Häubl*. They investigated under what conditions a vendor, such as an online shopping site, can benefit (most strongly) from providing direct access to uncensored information about its competitors' offerings. Specifically, they examined the effects of facilitating such access on consumer preference for the firm at varying levels of the ambiguity of the information environment and of consumer search cost. The results of two experiments suggested that providing access to competitor information enhances both perceived trustworthiness and consumer preference for the firm, and that these

effects increase in magnitude as ambiguity increases and as the cost of search rises.

The session concluded with moderated discussion led by *Pat West*.

SESSION ABSTRACTS

"The Impact of Online Product Review Characteristics on Consumer Preferences"

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To date, most research on online recommendations has focused on the computer algorithms underlying recommendations (e.g., Ansari et al. 2000); or the impact of recommender system on consumers' search effort and decision quality (Häubl & Trifts 2000; Lynch & Ariely 2000;). However, little research has examined the impact of human-generated recommendations, such as peer reviews, on consumers' preferences. Such reviews comprise an important component of the online consumer decision making process. For example, forty-four percent of respondents in a Bizrate.com survey consulted opinion sites prior to making a purchase and fifty-nine percent reported that consumer-generated reviews were more valuable than expert reviews (Piller 1999).

Even a cursory examination of peer generated product reviews on Internet retailing or opinion forum sites such as Amazon.com or ePinions.com, respectively, make clear that online product reviews contain complex information cues made further complex by the consumer's ability to manipulate the information. Thus, reviews include information about not only the product, but also the reviewer (expertise, credibility, popularity), and the review itself (review valence).

Further adding to the complexity, some of these information cues are unique to the online environment. For example, Web sites usually provide consumers with rankings of the reviewers based on characteristics such as the number of reviews each has written; consumers also have ready access to previous reviews and can search review databases by reviewer or other variables. Additionally, consumers can easily access the number of Web site users who trusted a particular reviewer and determine how useful a particular product review was to other web users. Unlike word-of-mouth in traditional formats, online product review systems enable consumers to track the historical reviewing record of a particular reviewer and group evaluations according to how other consumers perceive and evaluate a certain product review or reviewer simultaneously. Despite the wide appeal of online product reviews, in applied commercial settings, the assemblage of these complex and unique information cues has been largely ad hoc and online managers have little understanding of the impact of various cues on consumer behavior.

This research attempts to address these issues by constructing a series of studies that systematically investigate the impact of combinations of these cues on product preference and related consumer behavior outcomes in an online retailing environment.

Research on the effects of source characteristics (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and cue congruence (Chaiken & Maheswaran 1994; Maheswaran et al. 1992;) motivates our examination of the

joint impact of multiple source cues on consumer preference. Because previous research has found that consumers' shopping experiences may be utilitarian or hedonic (Chandon, Wansink & Laurent 2000; Mano & Oliver 1993) and product information can be similarly categorized as hedonic/emotion-laden utilitarian, we examined how hedonic/utilitarian processing goals, together with a hedonic/utilitarian production review affected the impact of source cue congruence on preference.

We hypothesize that when consumers are primed to adopt a hedonic processing goal and product information is hedonic, they will be more likely to process the information in an experiential style (Chen and Chaiken 1999; Epstein 1994). In this mode, individuals rely on simple "heuristics" or feelings regarding the stimuli to derive their judgments. Thus, we expect that compared to positive information, negative or incongruent information will disrupt the process of relying on "heuristics" and confront consumers with inconsistent information to resolve. Such disruption and confrontation will lead to more effortful information processing.

However, when consumers are primed to adopt a utilitarian processing goal and presented with utilitarian product information, they will be more likely to engage in "systematic processing," (Chen and Chaiken 1999). This mode of processing (cf. Epstein's (1994) rational system, Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) central route of processing, and Garcia-Marques and Mackie's (2001) analytical processing) involves careful attention to the specifics of the situation and the explicit use of a criterion or rule to make judgments (Garcia-Marques and Mackie, 2001). This bottom-up systematic mode of processing is controllable, productive, deliberative and relatively slow. Therefore, positive source cues are not necessarily favored over negative or incongruent cues, as we expect when product information and processing goals are hedonic congruent. On the contrary, consumers in this mode are more likely to pay more attention to the review itself than to source cues.

We designed an interactive experiment in an online environment that allowed us to test these and related theories. In the first study, we examined how 1) mindset priming (experiential vs. rational); 2) purchasing goal (hedonic vs. utilitarian); 3) product review descriptions (hedonic vs. utilitarian); and 4) reviewer/rating cue congruence (positive cues, negative cues, mixed-incongruent-cues) affected consumer preference ratings, evaluations of review and reviewer influence, involvement, processing mode, mood, Internet demographics, and a series of response latencies for each phase of the experiment.

The reviewer/rating cue congruence factor incorporated three different combinations of six source cues that mirrored those commonly found in Internet retailing and opinion Web sites. Four of the cues were reviewer cues: 1) number of reviews written (many/few), 2) reviewer expertise in the product category (expert/non-expert), 3) number of consumers who trusted the reviewer (many/few), and 4) usefulness of review as rated by other consumers (high/low). The remaining two cues were rating cues: 5) reviewer's rating (high/low), and 6) average of all reviewer ratings (high/low). Levels for Reviewer the consistency between his/her rating of the product and the average rating of other reviewers (inconsistent/consistent).

We constructed the three levels of the reviewer/rating reviews by assembling the six source cues as follows: level 1) congruency across cue domain (cues 1-4 positive; cues 5-6 positive); level 2) incongruity across cue domain, but congruity within cue domain (cues 1-4 negative; cues 5-6 positive); level 3) incongruity among reviewer cues (positive), incongruity within rating cues (different combinations for cues 1-4; cue 5 positive; cue 6 negative).

As an illustration from the large number of significant findings, results from the first study suggest that processing goal affects

the interaction between product review description and cue congruency. For respondents with a utilitarian processing goal, the particular review description did not affect cue congruence. That is, regardless of the product review, respondents with utilitarian processing goals made less positive product evaluations in incongruent cue conditions than in congruent cue conditions.

Interestingly, the results are more complex for respondents primed with a hedonic goal. For these consumers, how the review was framed did affect the impact of cue congruence. When the review was framed hedonically (consistent with their processing goal), incongruent source cues still negatively affected product evaluations compared to congruent cues. However, when the review description was utilitarian (inconsistent with processing goal), only negative source cues affected product evaluations negatively.

"Loves, Hates, and In-Betweens: The Role of Preference Structures in Agent Choice"

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Ashesh Mukherjee, McGill University

Anirban Mukhopadhyay, Columbia University

Prior to making product choices, consumers often go online to consider the advice of agents, who may be either professional critics (e.g., citysearch.com) or lay people (e.g., all-reviews.com). Since agents often provide contradictory advice, consumers must evaluate which agent is more likely to share their tastes and preferences. Previous research suggests that consumers use information about past opinion agreement between themselves and prospective agents as an important cue for agent choice. Recent work by Gershoff, Mukherjee, and Mukhopadhyay (2003) extended this result by showing that not all past agreements are weighted equally. Instead, agreement on extreme-rated alternatives was found to be perceived as more diagnostic than more moderately rated alternatives (the extremity effect) and agreement on extreme positive alternatives was found to be perceived as more diagnostic than agreement on extreme negative alternatives (the positivity effect). These results are particularly interesting in light of prior research that suggests negative word-of-mouth information is generally perceived to be more diagnostic than positive (Herr, Kardes, and Kim 1991).

The present research examines the underpinnings of these extremity and positivity effects. Drawing on research on positivity and negativity effects (Ahluwalia 2002; Skowronski and Carlson 1987) and recent studies on learning and memory for preferences (Herr and Page 2003; Hoeffler, Areilly, and West 2003), it is argued that extremity and positivity effects in diagnosticity of preferences arise from a fundamental difference in the depth and richness of positive and negative aspects of individuals' preference structures, whereby people know more about alternatives they love (and the reasons why they love them), than those that they hate or are indifferent about and perceive loved compared to hated or neutral alternatives as more informative about their own and others' underlying preferences. Consequently, consumers choose, are more confident in the abilities of, and see themselves as more similar to, agents who match them on their extreme positive opinions than those who match their extreme negative or moderate opinions.

These hypotheses were tested in a series of three completed studies. Study 1 examined perceptions of consumers' loved, hated, and neutrally rated alternatives as informative to others for understanding their preferences and predicting future ratings. Using five point scales (1-star to 5-stars), two hundred subjects rated fifty posters from an Internet site. Then, depending on condition, they were shown three of their hated (1-star), neutral (3-star), or loved (5-star) posters and told that another person would use these to predict the subject's ratings for a new set of posters. A fourth condition allowed subjects to choose posters of any rating level to

show the potential agent. Consistent with hypotheses, subjects rated greater confidence in the agent's ability to predict their ratings in the new set, and greater informativeness about their own preferences in the loved compared to hated, and hated compared to neutral conditions. Additional analysis favors the argument that subjects' perceive loved alternatives as more informative because they provide information about underlying preference structure and not because they are more diagnostic due to base-rate frequency.

Study two examined consumers' perceptions of the degree to which another's loved, hated, and neutrally rated alternatives affects confidence in their ability to predict the other's ratings for future alternatives and informativeness about underlying preferences. Ninety subjects were assigned to one of three conditions and shown only three posters that another individual (from Study 1) had rated either as loved, hated, or neutral. Subjects provided estimates of ability to predict the other's ratings and the degree to which the three posters were informative about the other's preferences. Consistent with the hypotheses confidence in predicting others' ratings was greatest in the loved, compared to hated or neutral conditions. Informativeness about the other's underlying preferences was similarly greater in the loved compared to hated, and greater in the hated compared to neutral conditions.

Study three was a with-in subjects design that examined consumers' perceptions of the degree to which agreements and disagreements between a consumer and a prospective agent on loved, hated, and neutrally rated alternatives influences confidence in the prospective agent, ratings of the informativeness of the agreement or disagreement, and knowledge about the prospective agent's preferences and tastes in the category. Sixty subjects used an on-line interactive tool that had four phases of data collection. In the first phase, subjects provided lists of movies they rated as 1-star, 3-stars, and 5-stars. In the second phase, subjects made a series of choices between two prospective agents who each provided their own ratings (1, 3, or 5 stars) for one of the movies the subject had provided (in the first phase). Agent choices were presented in random order and manipulated in a full-factorial design such that subjects made thirty-six pair-wise choices representing all possible combinations of 1, 3, and 5 star agreements and disagreements between the agent and the subject. In the third phase, prospective agents, described as having given 1, 3, or 5 star ratings to one of the movies that the subject had given a rating of 1, 3, or 5 stars, were sequentially presented to the subjects. All nine possible combinations of agent and subject ratings were provided in random order. Subjects rated each agent in terms of ability to act on the subject's behalf, perceived similarity, and inferences about the prospective agent's underlying preference structure. A final phase collected subjects beliefs about the percentage of others in the population who agreed with their ratings of each movie they provided in phase one.

Consistent with the hypotheses, agreement on loved alternatives was preferred in both choice and preference measures to agreement on hated or agreement on neutral ratings. Subjects rated their similarity in tastes with a prospective agent to be greater when the agent loved the same movie as the subject than when the agent hated the same movie as the subject. Further, subjects rated that they were more likely to love the same movies as the agent when there was agreement on a loved film, compared to their ratings that they were likely to hate the same movies as the agent when there was agreement on a hated film. Finally, subjects rated that it was more likely that the future agreements between the subject and the agent would be due to chance when there was agreement on a hated compared to a loved movie. As in study one, analysis of subjects' base rate expectations of agreement for loved versus hated movies rules out an alternative explanation for perceived diagnosticity

based on inferences about base-rate agreement for loved versus hated alternatives.

“The Effects of Facilitating Access to Competitor Information on Consumer Preference”

Valerie Trifts, Dalhousie University

Gerald Häubl, University of Alberta

From a consumer perspective, an important advantage of internet-based shopping environments relative to traditional retail settings is the drastically reduced cost of search for information about market offerings (Bakos 1997; Häubl and Trifts 2000). Low search costs in electronic environments may also benefit vendors in that this provides them with the opportunity to observe, record, and process—in an automated fashion—aspects of their competitors' product offerings. The potential for firms to use this information to strengthen customer relationships is an emerging research area. This paper identifies conditions under which it may be beneficial for a firm to facilitate access to *uncensored* information about its competitors' offerings.

We develop a model of the processes through which the facilitation of access to competitor information influences consumer preferences, both by affecting the perceived attractiveness of the firm's offerings relative to those of its competitors, and by enhancing the trustworthiness of the firm. In addition, we examine how such an action on the part of a vendor influences preference through its effect on consumer information search. We adopt a signaling framework (Spence 1974), and incorporate prior research on trust (Morgan and Hunt 1994) and attribution theory (Jones and Davis 1965; Kelly 1973) as a basis for theorizing about how consumers perceive, interpret, and respond to a firm's act of facilitating access to information about its own competitors.

Recent work by Trifts and Häubl (2003) provides preliminary evidence of the possibility that a retailer's act of providing access to uncensored competitor price information may result in enhanced preference for that vendor, especially if the latter's prices are neither clearly superior nor obviously inferior to those of its competitors. Furthermore, these initial results suggest that the positive effect of facilitating access to competitor's prices on consumer preference is mediated by the perceived trustworthiness of the retailer.

In the present paper, we investigate under what conditions the facilitation of access to competitor information—about price and quality attributes—tends to be most beneficial to a firm. Specifically, we examine how the proposed effects of facilitating such access on consumer preference vary as a function of (1) the degree of ambiguity of the information environment (Muthukrishnan 1995) and (2) the cost of obtaining information about competitors' offerings directly from these vendors (Moorthy, Ratchford, and Talukdar 1997). Two experiments were conducted using a simulated internet shopping environment. In both studies, subjects were asked to shop for vacation packages at a number of online travel sites.

In Experiment 1, we examined the effects of facilitating access to uncensored competitor information on consumer preference at different levels of ambiguity of the information environment. In a 2⁴ full-factorial mixed design,¹ facilitation of access was manipulated within subjects, where one of the two focal travel agents facilitated access to competitor information (“FC-yes”) and one did not (“FC-no”). Ambiguity was manipulated between subjects. In the *low-ambiguity* condition, the FC-yes and the FC-no site offered vacation packages for *identical* resorts at each destination, and the

¹Two of the four factors were between-subjects control factors pertaining to different aspects of stimulus presentation order.

packages were described in great detail. In the *high-ambiguity* condition, the *FC-yes* and *FC-no* travel agents offered packages for *different* resorts, and only resort names and prices were provided. This manipulation of ambiguity addressed two key aspects of information ambiguity, completeness and the comparability. After a practice task, subjects were asked to choose, for each of four destinations, the vacation package offered by one of the competing travel sites.

Our key prediction is that the positive effect of facilitating access to information about competitors' offerings is stronger when the ambiguity of the information environment is high rather than low. In addition, we propose the process hypothesis that, as the information environment becomes more ambiguous, consumers' choice of travel site is affected more by their perception of the vendors' trustworthiness, and less by their assessment of the attractiveness of the sites' offerings. The results of Experiment 1 provide support for both of these hypotheses. First, even when the *FC-yes* travel agent's vacation package was objectively inferior to that of its *FC-no* competitor, a significant portion of subjects chose the *FC-yes* site, but the latter's choice share was significantly greater when ambiguity was high (about 25%) than when ambiguity was low (about 5%). In addition, a significant interaction effect between perceived trustworthiness of the *FC-yes* firm and the level of ambiguity on relative site preference suggests that a vendor's trustworthiness is a stronger mediator of the effect of providing access to competitor information on consumer choice when ambiguity is high rather than low.

Experiment 2 focused on the role of consumer search cost in conjunction with the facilitation of access to competitor information, and on the effects of these two factors on the extent of consumers' independent information search and on relative vendor preference. We used a 3 x 2² full-factorial between-subjects design.² Participants were asked to evaluate a travel site, relative to its competitors, that facilitated access to (1) all competitors ("*FC-yes/high*"), (2) one competitor ("*FC-yes/low*"), or (3) no competitor ("*FC-no*"). In the *low-search-cost* condition, the experimenter's page contained direct links to descriptions of the relevant travel packages offered by all competitors. In the *high-search-cost* condition, the experimenter's page provided links to the different competitors' search-query pages, from which subjects had to re-enter the search criteria in order to obtain the description of a specific travel package offered by a particular firm. Our key hypothesis here is that, by facilitating direct access to uncensored information about its competitors' product offerings, a firm reduces the need for consumers to obtain this information elsewhere and is, thus, perceived by consumers as a more useful source of market information. Preliminary analyses suggest that the facilitation of access to competitor information does in fact result in less search and in greater preference for the firm facilitating such access. Further analyses will reveal whether these effects are contingent upon the continued provision of access to competitor information, or whether the effects may persist into subsequent shopping encounters in which the retailer no longer facilitates such access.

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²The order in which subjects were exposed to the different comparative outcomes was counterbalanced.

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ROUNDTABLE
**Using Qualitative Data Analysis-Part II: Issues in Representations
Suggestions for Positioning Interpretivist Consumer Research**

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A roundtable session on qualitative consumer research methods, organized by Eric Arnould and Melanie Wallendorf, provided the inspiration for this note. As the discussion unfolded, the question of how to position interpretivist consumption research for journal submission, most especially to the *Journal of Consumer Research*, came to loom large.

The standard answer to this question is “always remember you are not studying context X but some broader theoretical issue that is manifested in context X.” The point being that interpretivist researchers, particularly less experienced ones, often become overly wedded to the details of their research context and, hence, their analyses suffer from being too descriptive, too particularistic, and lacking in theoretical abstraction. While the spirit of this advice is right on the money, it does not acknowledge that in fact, a certain kind of contextual framing can (and does) work exceedingly well. Conversely, the rhetorical emphasis on “theoretical positioning” is too vague on a very key question—what kind of theory? As I now see it, interpretivist papers published in *JCR* (as well as related journals like *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *Journal of Retailing*, *Consumption, Markets & Culture*) are organized around one of three different positioning strategies. They are discussed below.

High theory positioning

These papers engage a significant theoretical debate about consumption issues that is playing out in another related source field (i.e., sociology, anthropology, media/cultural studies) and then build a case for the debate’s relevance to the *JCR* audience. This positioning is the high-risk and high effort strategy. To succeed, an author has to become very well-versed in this core debate and its unique theoretical history and then translate (and adapt) the key issues to the *JCR* literature. Pragmatically, papers positioned this way can be a very hard sell because some reviewers will not be up on the core debate (and will demand much more immediate *JCR* relevance) while others will push the authors to make an original contribution to the source field. In other words, here is your rock and here is your hard place.

This cautionary tale aside, a high theory positioning strategy can sometimes work quite well. Doug Holt’s (1998) article “Does Cultural Capital Structure American Consumption,” drew from a theoretical debate underway in sociology. However, this article also demonstrated that this sociological perspective could revitalize consumer research on class and consumption. Consumer researchers, from across paradigms, are using ideas drawn from that paper. As a few other examples, Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1990) and Firat and Venkatesh (1995) respectively won *Journal of Consumer Research* articles of the year with papers positioned along high theory lines.

In sum, strategy 1 is probably the toughest road to publication and, with rare exceptions, it certainly is not the strategy young scholars should adopt for their dissertations or journal submissions. On the plus side, an analysis following a high theory path can foster considerable intellectual growth, it can generate a plethora of ideas for future research, and when it all comes together really well, a pathbreaking article can result. At some point, I think writing a paper of this type is a worthwhile challenge but it is probably best treated as a down stream intellectual project.

Theory-driven categorical positioning

This positioning strategy tends to get lost in the standard advice of “remember you are not studying a context but a larger theoretical question.” This oversight is consequential because this second strategy is a straightforward and highly accessible approach (for both readers and writers). It has a much higher probability of success than strategy 1.

A lot of very rigorous and quite influential interpretivist consumer research has focused on broad categories of consumption phenomenon such as servicescapes, brand communities, brand relationships, subcultures of consumption, gift giving, etc. None of these domains are explanatory theories or even models per se. They describe a general category of phenomenon (i.e., there are many different brand communities, different kinds of servicescapes etc). You can mine these areas and develop a stream around them. For example, gift giving has generated a considerable amount of research that explores a nexus of psychological, social, and cultural dynamics related to these ritualized acts of consumption (see Belk and Coon 1993; Fisher and Arnold 1990; Joy 2001; Otnes, Lowery, and Kim 1993; Mick and DeMoss 1990; Ruth, Otnes, & Brunel 1999; Sherry 1983; Wooten 2000).

However, this positioning is still very much theoretical in nature. For example, if you take up the topic of gift giving, you must also become familiar with an expansive and extensive cross-disciplinary literature that has theorized its various dimensions and your analysis must forge theoretical linkages to these canonical studies. Let’s take the case of brand communities (Muniz and O’Guinn 2000; McAlexander, Schouten and Koenig 2002). A researcher does not simply observe a variety of websites that are devoted to a particular brand—like Saab or Apple—and “see” a brand community. Rather, he/she must invoke theoretical knowledge to recognize an underlying commonality. In the case of brand community, the parallel phenomenon is fan communities, which have been studied extensively in the media studies literature. In a brand community, the brand functions in the role that a celebrity, musical group, movie, or television show serves for fan communities by providing a common point of interest and social linkage among a broad swath of consumers.

This kind of theoretical transfer is an excellent way to develop relatively novel marketing and consumer behavior concepts (e.g., brand communities) that can still be linked to a substantial body of theory. Such theoretical linkages can offer new perspectives on important theoretical questions (i.e. what is the nature of consumer-brand relationships?; how do communities emerge in a postmodern consumer society?) and they have the potential to resonate with a broader readership; factors which usually equate to a high impact article.

The set-up for articles positioned in this manner is very clean. You first make a case that this category of consumption is worth researching because it represents a socio-culturally significant practice (e.g., gift-giving) or it reveals a latent cultural tension or a nascent cultural trend (e.g., Rob Kozinet’s (2002) ethnography of the Burning Man festival) or that it is a likely place to discover something new and important about consumer motivations, choices, and experiences (see Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993; Price and Arnould 1993). You can invoke some combination of the three rationales and it does not hurt if your categorical phenomenon has

economic significance. Next, you make the case that your specific case is a good example of the category (i.e. river rafting is a good example of the extended service encounter; skydiving is a good example of high-risk leisure consumption). [This justification should be fairly self-evident; if not, rethink your general category].

After the set-up, you develop a systematic and nuanced interpretation using concepts most often drawn from sociology, anthropology, and social psychology, many of which may have already been applied in other *JCR* studies. In this positioning, a theoretical concept like ritual or cultural capital is simply a tool of explication. Reviewers sometimes get confused on this point. I have seen situations where an author uses a construct like ritual as an analytic tool and a reviewer will say, “oh, we already know about rituals” or “what is your contribution to the vast literature on rituals?” If you are aware of the distinction between a high theory contribution (i.e., we are using this consumption setting to create a general theory of ritual) versus a categorical positioning (i.e., we are using ritual to explicate something interesting about this broad class of consumption phenomenon), you can easily circumvent such objections.

Finally, the paper needs to end on a strong note that cashes out the key implications of its findings and offers some kind of compelling theoretical pay-off.

Arnould and Price’s (1993) “River Magic: Extraordinary Experiences and the Extended Service Encounter” is an excellent example of a theory-driven, categorical positioning strategy. Their positioning was two-fold: extraordinary experiences are an interesting and important class of consumption experiences and, second, that many kinds of extended service encounter (an important economic category) seek to deliver them. Then, Arnould and Price (1993) theoretically unpacked a specific kind of magical extended service encounter—river rafting—using the anthropological concepts of liminality, ritual, rites of passage, and communitas. Finally, they delivered a theoretical pay-off by arguing that, contra existing theory, consumers’ satisfaction with the extended service encounter had little to do with their initial expectations; rather the drivers of satisfaction emerge through consumption experiences. Bingo, we have a very well-received and imminently readable *JCR* paper.

As a segue into the third positioning strategy, please note that it would have been possible, for Arnould and Price, using *their same data*, to have turned their article on its head. Arnould and Price’s (1993) main story could have been that the dominant theoretical explanation of customer satisfaction needed to be revised in a substantive way (a point derivable from prior studies suggesting gaps in the dominant theoretical view) and that the extended service encounter is a good categorical context for developing this new perspective. This alternative positioning strategy is one that Fournier and Mick (1999) developed with much skill (and success) using longitudinal data on consumers’ experiences with technology.

To clarify, I am *not* saying that Arnould and Price (1993) should have positioned their paper around satisfaction. If Arnould and Price had not been as adept at building a case for the CB relevance of river rafting/extended service encounter, however, they would have probably gotten editorial pressure to significantly reposition the paper. More generally, reviewers tend to either reject outright or demand a major repositioning (typically classed as a risky revision) whenever authors do not build a convincing case for the significance of their research domain. The critique usually says something like, “the implications you have buried in the discussion are really the important story but these ideas do not seem well integrated into the paper and they need to be pushed much further. So, lead off with these concluding points and redo the lit review and analysis to further enrich your new starting premises.”

At that point, you may face a choice (depending on the editor’s predilections). Do I seek to strengthen the case for the relevance of my categorical context and find a way to make the analysis seem more insightful and interesting or do I invest the effort needed to radically reposition the paper? I believe the answer to this question lies in positioning strategy #3.

Reconceptualizing Marketing’s core theoretical constructs

Customer satisfaction, brand equity, advertising persuasiveness, customer relation management, consumer lifestyles are some of marketing’s core concerns and each has a specific body of theory to explain them. These theories may have been originally borrowed from psychology and other fields but they have been developed and thoroughly integrated into the marketing canon. Some of the most highly cited and award-winning papers in the interpretivist literature have used qualitative data to develop a novel experiential or cultural perspective on these chestnut constructs (Fournier 1998; Holt 1997; Mick and Buhl 1992; Ritson and Elliott 1999). This kind of theoretical positioning tends to be a much easier sell to reviewers and to be embraced by a broader swath of readers than the high theory approach (strategy one) but it can pose some pitfalls which probably would not arise with a theory-driven categorical positioning (strategy 2).

For one thing, you really need to do your homework on the mainstream theoretical construct. This positioning strategy will inevitably invoke critical concerns that your argument is based upon a theoretical strawman. So, be very careful to recognize the sophistication and nuances of the core marketing theory being engaged and, second, the kinds of domains where it is most (and least) applicable. Per this latter point, the least contentious way to challenge an established theory is to make a sound case that it systematically ignores some important aspects of a given phenomenon be it satisfaction (Fournier and Mick 1999) or brand loyalty (see Fournier 1998) or consumer value systems (Holt 1997; Thompson and Troester 2002). Although I find the “blind researchers and the elephant” allegory philosophically problematic, the rhetorical claim that an established theory is not wrong only incomplete tends to invoke less strident counter arguing.

Now let’s assume you have submitted a paper positioned via strategy #2 (i.e., theory-driven categorical positioning) and the reviews come back suggesting a massive repositioning and reanalysis. If the proposed new positioning points you toward a chestnut marketing issue, revising along those lines could well be the most efficacious means to negotiate the review process and there is a reasonable chance that your overall disciplinary impact will be increased.

Alternatively, let’s say, you are undertaking a study (or dissertation) that has been designed around a strategy #2 and, during the write-up, you realize that your findings have a lot to say about some marketing chestnut. Under that scenario, I suggest you seriously consider turning the paper (or dissertation) on its head. An immediate benefit is that your perceived marketing relevance and (personal marketability) will go way up. Once again, your path to publication is also likely to become less arduous and the disciplinary impact of the study may well be enhanced. The down side is that you will have to do a lot of rewriting (your whole lit review might have to change) and your analysis will likely have to be reworked considerably to systematically model the how, when, and why aspects of the new focal questions.

If the project is a dissertation, odds are you will not have the time to undertake such a massive transformation. So, write up the project as designed and get your degree. You can undertake the inversion when you start converting the dissertation into a journal article.

Thanks much for reading through this and I hope you found some value in it.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Understanding the Evaluation of Future Events: The Impact of Psychological Characteristics Both of the Events and of the Evaluators

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Most decisions consumers make have some form of time component, such as choosing between a cheeseburger (to satisfy a short-term craving) or a granola bar (in line with their long-term diet choice), deciding whether to pay for the gym monthly or yearly, buying financial investment products with delayed returns, or deciding how frequently to visit the dentist to ensure healthy teeth into old age. Intertemporal choice research helps us understand consumer behavior in such decisions. Most mainstream research in this area has focused on measuring the rates at which people tend to discount the future. However, in recent years a renewed interest in understanding the psychological processes underlying discounting has developed (e.g. Liberman & Trope, 1998; Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999; Ebert, 2001; Frederick, Loewenstein and O'Donoghue, 2002). The papers in this session contribute novel work of this type focusing on psychological characteristics of the events to be evaluated (paper 1), of the evaluators themselves (paper 3) and on the interplay between the two (paper 2). In addition, each of these papers does much to help contextualize and provide external validity for this area of research both by the stimuli and methods used (e.g., using behavioral measures and manipulations based on everyday situations) and in the concepts examined, (i.e., the feasibility, desirability and motivational impact of future rewards and important individual differences such as IQ and impatience).

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

“Value From Highlighting Time-Appropriate Outcomes”

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Suppose you were to buy a product and you find an option that is both desirable and feasible. How can the value of this dominant option change as a function of time? We draw on Construal Level Theory (CLT) to suggest that time can influence the value of the dominant option depending on the aspects emphasized in the decision making process. We contend that emphasizing temporally appropriate (vs. inappropriate) aspects of the event in decision-making will enhance (vs. decrease) the value of the choice.

Construal level theory (CLT) suggests that peoples' mental representation of future events changes as a function of temporal distance (Trope and Liberman 2002). As temporal distance increases, the events are more likely to be represented in terms of super-ordinate goals focusing on desirability aspects of an event rather than sub-ordinate dimensions like means and the feasibility of reaching a desired end-state. Hence, in the distant future, desirability concerns are primary whereas feasibility concerns play a secondary role. In the near future, feasibility concerns are primary where as desirability concerns take on a secondary role (Liberman and Trope 1998).

We suggest that when people emphasize time appropriate aspects in the decision process, they associate higher value with their choice. When making a choice in the distant future, emphasizing desirability aspects in the decision making process, will enhance value, since desirability aspects are primary concerns in the distant future. Emphasizing feasibility concerns, which are secondary in the distant future, will decrease the value of the chosen option, even if the option were a dominant choice. When making a choice in the near future context, feasibility concerns are primary and

highlighting these primary feasibility concerns should result in increased value. On the other hand, highlighting desirability concerns that are secondary in the near future should decrease the value that is associated with the option. In sum, people should value their choice more when they rely on temporally appropriate aspects in their decision-making. In three studies, we find that emphasizing time appropriate dimensions enhances the value, whereas emphasizing time inappropriate dimensions dilutes the value associated with the choice.

In study 1, we primed participants to emphasize either desirability or feasibility related information in their decision-making. The participants then chose one out of three alternatives, to be available either in the near or distant future. All participants chose the one dominant alternative and then were asked to evaluate it. Our results show that participants valued their choice more in the distant future when they emphasized desirability rather than feasibility. Participants, who made the choice in a near future context, associated greater value with their choice when they emphasized feasibility rather desirability.

In studies 2 and 3, we primed participants to be in either a “Why” or a “How” mindset. “Why” mindsets direct attention towards desirability concerns where as “How” mindsets draw attention towards feasibility. Participants then made choices in the near or distant future context. The choice set up was such that all participants chose the one dominant alternative and were then asked to evaluate their chosen option. We find that participants who made a choice in the distant future context valued their choice more when they paid attention to desirability rather than feasibility. On the other hand, participants who made a choice in the near future context valued their choice more when they focused on feasibility rather than desirability.

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“The Motivational Force of Future Rewards: Differences between Explicit and Implicit Valuations for Future and Uncertain Rewards”

*Jane E.J. Ebert, University of Minnesota
Drazen Prelec, MIT*

In many decisions consumers make, they appear to place much more value on short-term than on long-term desires (i.e., they show high discounting of the future). They choose unhealthy foods and skip a session at the gym despite resolutions to eat healthily and exercise regularly. They procrastinate at work, invest insufficiently or fail to take preventative health measures, like visiting the dentist regularly.

The reasons for such pervasive myopia in consumers' lives are only partially understood. We know that immediate concerns or desires (e.g., eating a cheeseburger) can exercise a uniquely powerful hold on people's attention (Mischel & Baker, 1975) and are

especially potent when visceral needs are heightened (e.g., the person is hungry). While this pull of the present can account for much discounting, studies without an immediate option still show high discounting, demonstrating a lack of attraction or “motivational force” of the future. Psychologically, this lack of motivational force of the future is less well understood, but is possibly largely explained by a perception of the future as relatively “unreal” relative to the present. Early researchers suggested that people perceive the distant future as remote, pallid, and uncertain, relative to a more arousing, vivid and predictable near future (Rae, 1834; Böhm-Bawerk, 1889), and recent empirical evidence shows that temporally distant events are indeed construed more abstractly than are proximal events (Liberman and Trope, 1998).

Conventional measures of consumers’ discount rates seem to correspond with consumers’ myopic behaviors. Ask people to choose between a reward of \$100 now and \$120 in a year and most will choose the current reward. This choice implies a discount rate of at least 20%—surprisingly high compared to typical rates of return on invested money of, say, 1 to 8%. However, even though such discount rate estimates are high, we suspect that these “explicitly” obtained estimates might be *underestimates* of discount rates “implicitly” implied by consumers’ behaviors.

The distinction between such implicit and explicit discount rates hinges on whether an intertemporal tradeoff that is logically present in a decision is also psychologically the focal point of attention. For example, a choice between \$100 now and \$120 in one year’s time forces attention on both present and future options, i.e., on the intertemporal trade-off. In contrast, a decision, e.g., to go to a restaurant this evening, also logically involves an intertemporal trade-off, because if the money is spent tonight than some other bit of future consumption will have to be sacrificed. Here, however, the focus is only on the present event. The future event is, at best, peripheral in attention for the decision. The lack of attention to the future in many decisions such as this is likely to be augmented by the “unreal” or uncertain nature of the future. We suspect that this lack of attention to the future in many real behaviors and decisions might account in large part for the low motivational force of the future. However, conventional explicit measures, that compel some attention to the future, seem unlikely to fully capture this lack of motivational force. Thus we expect implicit discount rates to be considerably higher than explicit discount rates.

It may be difficult to design a measure to capture value due to lack of motivational force. In our first study we attempt to do this, i.e., to obtain an implicit rate of discounting based on the motivational force of the future. In addition we test our hypothesis that our obtained implicit discount rates will be higher than more conventionally obtained explicit rates.

In a second study we attempt to compare the motivational force of a future reward with that of an uncertain one. Finding a similar difference between explicit and implicit valuations for both future rewards and for uncertain rewards would fit with research suggesting that temporally distant and uncertain events may be psychologically similar (e.g., Prelec & Loewenstein, 1991; Keren & Roelofsma, 1995), where temporal distance and uncertainty may each convey a sense of psychological distance (Ekman & Lundberg, 1971).

In line with our hypothesis we find that implicit valuations are considerably smaller (and discount rates considerably larger) than are explicit valuations (and discount rates) for both temporally distant and for uncertain rewards. Moreover, while explicit valuations for future and uncertain rewards differed, implicit valuations of future and uncertain rewards were more similar to each other. These results have several implications. They suggest: 1) that it may be possible to obtain valuations of rewards that capture the motiva-

tional force of a reward; 2) that conventional explicit discount rates for future rewards may underestimate discount rates implied by actual behavior, at least where behavior is motivationally based; and 3) these results are consistent with research suggesting future and uncertain events may be psychologically similar in some respects (here similar in motivational force, while less similar in more cognitive evaluations).

Study details

In study 1, 171 participants worked for as long as they wished on a tedious task (counting the instances of a 5-letter series in other syntax) in return for a reward for perfect accuracy. They completed two such tasks: the first (baseline) task offered an immediate reward of \$2 for a correct answer; the second task (experimental) offered a reward that varied according to one of five experimental conditions: 3 “calibration” conditions (Immediate \$2, Immediate \$10 and Immediate \$25) and two future reward conditions (Far \$25 and Very far \$25). Immediate rewards were given to participants immediately after the session, while Far and Very Far rewards were to be mailed in 3 and 12 months time respectively. In addition, participants in the Far and Very Far conditions provided their present value of either \$25 cash in 3 months or \$25 in 12 months (respectively) as a measure of explicit discounting. We compared participants implicit and explicit “present values” for the future rewards by comparing the time actually spent on the task with an estimate of time spent corresponding to their explicit value (estimated using a regression based on participants’ values of times spent in the calibration conditions). There were significant differences for both future reward conditions, with a particularly strong effect for the 12 month delayed reward, where the actual time spent was less than that estimated based on participants’ explicit present values. These and other analyses suggest that implicit discount rates obtained based on participants’ behavior, and reflecting the motivational force of a future event, are much greater than discount rates obtained explicitly.

Study 2 was identical, except that the conditions were: 3 calibration conditions (Immediate \$1, Immediate \$10, Immediate \$25) and 3 experimental conditions (\$25 in 12 months, a 10% chance of \$25, and a 60% chance of \$25). The results were very similar to those in study 1. The actual time spent for all three experimental conditions was considerably less than that estimated based on the same participants’ explicit values.

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“Intelligence and Discounting”

Shane Frederick, MIT

Considerable evidence has suggested a link between cognitive ability and the discount rate applied to future rewards. For example, Mischel and colleagues have found that willingness to delay gratification increases with both age and intelligence, and that it predicts subsequent academic achievement. (See, e.g. Mischel & Metzner, 1962). The relation between IQ and discounting is also suggested by the finding that consumers with high income have lower imputed discount rates than consumers with low income (if one further assumes the well established, albeit modest, correlation between income and IQ).

However, the reasons for the relation between IQ and discounting are unclear. Some have postulated that those with low discount rates become smarter (e.g. by foregoing fun events to spend time studying), while others have postulated that the effects can be explained by differences in cognitive representations (smarter people are better able to imagine future outcomes and those outcomes are thereby endowed with a sufficient sense of reality to support a preference for a larger, but delayed reward). Others have postulated that people of higher IQ live in more benign environments and are, correspondingly, more confident that future rewards will actually be delivered. Still others have speculated that smarter people can better summon the “will” to override impulses to settle for the smaller more immediate reward.

In a series of studies involving college students, I measure the relation between IQ (as measured by a 12 item test), and various hypothetical and real indices of discounting, including choices between smaller proximate rewards and larger delayed rewards, willingness to wait (in days) to receive a discount on a high definition television set, and willingness to pay (in dollars) to accelerate airline travel or the shipping of a desired book. By many (but not all) of these measures, students with higher cognitive ability are more patient (their imputed discount rates are lower).

Cognitive ability, however, is just one factor that affects impatience levels. Thus, I contrast the specific effects of cognitive ability with other moderators of impatience, including experimental manipulations, where impatience is temporarily induced in some respondents by asking them to wait for a desired event (e.g. the scratching off a lottery ticket or the opening of a bag of candy). For the dependent variables that were shared across studies, I compare and contrast the differences in effects between temporary experimentally manipulated impatience levels and “stable” or “inherent” (i.e. IQ related) impatience levels. I also show that while IQ is positively correlated with behavioral measures of patience (e.g. whether one prefers \$400 in ten years over \$100 now) it is *not* correlated with self expressed measures of patience (e.g. the degree to which respondents endorse the statement “I am more patient than other people my age”). Indeed, by such “self-report” measures of patience, smarter respondents are somewhat more *impatient*.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Implicit Measures of Consumer Judgments and Choice

Andrew A. Mitchell, University of Toronto

SESSION OVERVIEW

Traditionally, consumer behavior research has characterized consumers as deliberate decision makers and has tended to neglect the role of nonconscious or automatic processes on judgment and choice (Bargh, 2002). An important challenge in consumer research is to develop a greater understanding of the relation between conscious and unconscious processes in the consumer environment. While consumer researchers are familiar with the concept of implicit attitudes, this session was assembled with the goal of explicitly examining both the theoretical and applied issues concerning the use of implicit measures of attitudes in consumer research.

The first paper by Dominika Maison, Anthony Greenwald and Ralph Bruin reported the results of two studies designed to examine the relation between implicit and explicit measures of consumer ethnocentrism. Consumer ethnocentrism (CE) is defined as conscious preference of own country products compared to foreign products (Watson & Wright, 2000; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). The results of two studies showed that on explicit measures subjects preferred foreign products, but on implicit measures they preferred Polish products. Moreover, people who had weaker explicit preference for foreign products had stronger implicit preference for Polish products, which can produce dissociation between implicit and explicit attitudes.

In "The Relation between Implicit and Explicit Attitudes and Spontaneous Choice," Melanie Dempsey and Andrew Mitchell examine the predictability of implicit attitudes in a spontaneous choice situation. Implicit attitudes toward two fictitious brands of pens were created using a conditioning task in which participants are unaware of the contingency relationships between the CS (target pens) and the US (affective stimuli). Conflicting explicit attitudes were also created based on beliefs about the attributes of the pens. They find that participants who had formed a strong implicit attitude toward a fictitious brand of pen and were not instructed to form an explicit attitude were more likely to choose pen associated with the implicit attitude. They also find support for their hypothesis that implicit attitudes are correlated with intuitive or affective processing of information.

Alternative perspectives of implicit attitudes and their relation with explicit attitudes is focus of the third paper "Alternative Theoretical Positions on Implicit Attitudes." Paul Herr, Andrew Mitchell and Melanie Dempsey provide insight into the theoretical basis of implicit attitudes and discuss three conceptual views of implicit attitudes. The first position discussed is based on a context independent view of implicit attitudes. In this view, implicit attitudes are the "true" attitude, while explicit attitudes are subject to context effects. The second position is a dual model of attitudes in which different evaluations of the same attitude object exist in memory (e.g., Wilson et al., 2000). The third theoretical perspective of implicit attitudes draws on the work from dual information processing theory (e.g., Epstein, 1994; Sloman, 1996; Smith & DeCoster, 1999). The parallels between this body of research and dissociations between implicit and explicit attitudes were discussed.

Whereas there is a long history of consumer research on explicit attitudes, implicit attitudes have only recently received attention. Together these papers show that theoretical and empirical research on implicit attitudes is of great importance to understand-

ing the impact of environmental stimuli on consumer attitudes and behavior.

"Implicit Consumer Ethnocentrism—An Example of Dissociation between Explicit and Implicit Preference"

Dominika Maison, University of Warsaw

Anthony G. Greenwald, University of Washington

Ralph H. Bruin, Medical Data Management Corp

Consumer ethnocentrism (CE) is defined as a conscious preference of own country products compared to foreign products (Watson & Wright, 2000; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). CE can have different backgrounds: a) cognitive—when people believe that products produced in their own country are better ("Our products have better quality"); b) affective—when people have a positive affective reaction toward own country products ("I love American products"); c) ideological (normative)—when people believe that it is appropriate to purchase products manufactured in their home country ("It is better for the American economy to buy American products").

CE is observed in many countries. However, in economically developed countries consumers have stronger preferences toward own country products than in under-developed countries. It is explained that in under-developed countries people often have experience with poorer quality of their own country's products compared to foreign brands. This situation can lead to dissociation between implicit and explicit attitudes and it can produce internal conflict between automatic preference based on emotions and rational judgment based on observation and experience.

The goal of two studies was to explore explicit and implicit preferences toward foreign vs. local products and their relation to behavior. In the first study we measured attitude toward Polish vs. foreign brands of cigarettes (Polish cigarettes are considered to have lower quality than foreign brands). Participants (102 college students; 37 smoking; 65 not smoking) participated in an IAT study (Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998) where stimuli were names of Polish (e.g. Sobieskie, Carmen) vs. Western cigarettes brands (e.g. Marlboro, Camel), and completed a questionnaire about their opinion about different brands of products. On explicit measures (questionnaire), subjects preferred foreign brands, but on implicit measures (IAT) they preferred Polish cigarettes. This dissociation was stronger among non-smokers than among smokers. However even though smokers smoked foreign brands and preferred foreign brands (explicit measure), the implicit measurements showed a slight preference for Polish brands.

The second study investigated implicit consumer ethnocentrism toward multiple product categories. In seeking to understand CE, we explored its relation toward explicit consumer ethnocentrism (measured by CATESCALE, Shimp & Sharma, 1987), explicit preference of Polish vs. foreign products, and quality perception of Polish products. Participants (97 college students) completed an IAT task, where stimuli were Polish vs. foreign brand names in different product categories, and filled in two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was administered before the IAT task; it concerned explicit attitudes toward brands and products. The second questionnaire (CATECALE) was completed after the IAT test. The results showed a pattern similar to that obtained in the first study: on explicit measures subjects preferred foreign products, but on implicit measures they preferred Polish products. Furthermore,

subjects who had weaker explicit preferences for foreign products had stronger implicit preferences for Polish products. No relation was observed between implicit consumer ethnocentrism (IAT) and explicit ethnocentrism as measured by the CATESCALE.

“The Relation between Implicit and Explicit Attitudes and Spontaneous Choice”

Melanie A. Dempsey, University of Toronto

Andrew A. Mitchell, University of Toronto

The recent surge of interest in implicit social cognition has been accompanied by an increase in the use of indirect or implicit attitude measures (e.g., Fazio et al., 1986; Greenwald et al., 1998; Nosek & Banaji, 2001). But as Bargh (2002) and others have noted, the consumer behavior field has not directed a great deal of attention to the substantial role of nonconscious processes in consumer judgment and behavior or under what conditions it may influence behavior. The present research was designed to address this void. We examine the effect of implicit attitudes that develop from a conditioning procedure on subsequent choice behavior when participants are presented with conflicting product attribute information.

Olson & Fazio (2001) have developed a conditioning procedure in which attitudinal conditioning effects are found on implicit attitude measures. The appeal of this procedure is that subjects are exposed to the CS and US in a manner more consistent with real life advertising (paired together). In our studies we borrowed the procedure as outlined in Olson & Fazio (2001) with slight modifications. The target conditioned stimulus consisted of two fictitious brands of pens and the filler images were additional fictitious products that undergraduates would be familiar with (e.g., deodorant, sunglasses, and toothpaste). The objective of the first two preliminary studies was to replicate previous findings using fictitious brands of consumer products. We found a main effect of target valence, where the pen that had been paired with positive images was rated more positively than the pen that had been paired with negative images on implicit attitude measures (IAT; Greenwald et al., 1998).

After the target pens had been conditioned, participants were presented with attribute information for both brands of pens in the form of print advertisements that were written to contradict the earlier formed valence. The instructions for evaluating the ads were written to encourage some subjects to form an attitude on-line (at the time the judgment relevant information was presented), while others were not expected to form an attitude at the time of exposure to the attribute information (memory condition) (Hastie & Park; 1986). Subsequently, subjects were required to choose between the two fictitious brands of pens. We found that those participants who were not instructed to form an attitude toward a brand during exposure to product information were more likely to choose the positively conditioned pen over the pen described by the more positive attributes. If we assume a majority of advertising is processed by consumers under low levels of involvement, then our finding has important consumer behavior implications.

We also investigated the hypothesis that lower order perceptual associations such as affect or feelings generated may influence attitudes measured by implicit measures. Epstein's cognitive-experiential self-theory (CEST; 1994) suggests that people adapt to their environments through one of two conceptual systems—the preconscious/experiential or the conscious/rational. Whereas the experiential system makes connections through associations, the rational system does so through logical considerations. According to CEST, information processed in the experiential mode is affective in nature. If implicit attitudes are more susceptible to affective or emotional influences, then there may be reliable differences in the

tendency for individuals to form implicit attitudes. We administered the affective orientation scale developed by Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield (1990) as a measure of individual difference in reliance on emotions/feelings versus logic/facts in decision-making. The results show that implicit attitudes (IAT and evaluative priming) were stronger for participants who scored higher in affective orientation, supporting our prediction.

This present research makes important contributions to the literature. This is the first study to our knowledge that demonstrates that implicit preferences towards a product can persist in the face of conflicting information and influence choice behavior. Additionally, we provide preliminary evidence that implicit measures of attitude tap a database of knowledge that is affective in nature.

“Alternative Theoretical Positions on Implicit Attitudes”

Paul M. Herr, University of Colorado

Andrew A. Mitchell, University of Toronto

Melanie A. Dempsey, University of Toronto

There has been considerable interest recently in implicit measures of social cognition (e.g., Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Much of this interest has focused on the measurement of implicit attitudes. It has been argued that these measures of attitude allow researchers to learn more about attitudes by gaining access to the unconscious mind (Banaji, 2001). While a variety of different procedures have been used for measuring implicit attitudes, most research has been conducted using one of two different procedures (Fazio & Olson, 2003). The first is an evaluative priming task which assesses the automatic activation of attitudes from memory and was proposed by Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell and Kardes (1986). The second is the Implicit Association Test (IAT) which was developed by Greenwald et al. (1998). The evaluative priming task assesses what is automatically activated from memory upon presentation of the attitude object whereas the IAT assesses the strength of association between an attitude object and an attribute dimension. Both procedures use response times to measure implicit attitudes and both yield information about a person's attitude not yielded by conventional self-report measures.

While there are important methodological differences in the two approaches, here we would like to focus on alternative conceptual views of implicit attitudes and their relationship to explicit attitudes. Basically, there seems to be three positions each with minor variations. The first position is that implicit attitudes are the “true” attitudes, while explicit attitudes are constructed and are subject to context effects. This has been the underlying view of most of the research on stereotypes. An individual's implicit attitude is their true attitude toward a stereotype, while the explicit attitude represents a politically correct attitude. The argument supporting implicit attitude measures as reflecting the true attitude was that individuals could not “fake” them. This view suggests that both implicit and explicit measures of attitude tap a single construct. Self-reported attitudes are a combination of the implicit attitude and self-presentation.

The second position was put forth by Wilson et al. (2000) who argue for the independence of implicit and explicit attitudes. They propose a dual model of attitudes in which different evaluations of the same attitude object may exist simultaneously in memory. According to this model when an individual has more than one evaluation of the same attitude object, one is activated automatically upon presentation of the stimulus (implicit attitude) and the other requires motivation or capacity to retrieve (explicit attitude). They suggest that when an individual changes their attitude, under some conditions the original attitude is not replaced but remains in memory and can be activated automatically.

The final position draws on models which propose a dual theory of information processing (e.g., Epstein, 1994; Sloman, 1996; Smith & DeCoster, 1999). While there are conceptual differences in these models, they all propose that information is processed through either an associative/experiential mode or one that is rational or rule-based. Associative processing is quick, intuitive and relies on associations that are more perceptual or affective in nature. The rational or rule-based system is conscious, analytical, primarily verbal, and relatively affect-free. There are obvious parallels between these modes of processing and implicit and explicit attitudes.

Currently, dissociations between implicitly and explicitly measured attitudes toward the same attitude object have been predominately explained by either self-presentation concerns or unreliable implicit measures. We argue that the third position holds promise for investigating implicit attitudes in the consumer domain. Smith & DeCoster (1999) suggest that the two processing modes (associative and rule-based) tap separate databases representing knowledge in two distinct formats. While the researchers discuss the implications of their model for explaining dissociations in a number of domains (e.g., implicit/explicit memory), we believe that applying model of dual information processing to consumers' implicit and explicit attitudes would be insightful. Different evaluations (explicit and implicit attitudes) toward an attitude object might develop simultaneously based on the two systems processing different kinds of information or experience associated with the target object. Implicit attitudes may be more influenced by lower order perceptual associations, whereas explicit attitudes are based on higher order beliefs. According to Epstein (1994), features associated with the experiential system are more concrete and affective in nature because information processed in the experiential route rely more on feelings generated. Therefore we should not be surprised to find explicit and implicit attitudes dissociated even in areas where demand characteristics are not believed to play a role. Understanding the role of perceptual processes on consumers' implicit attitudes is an important and fruitful area for future research.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Consuming Television: Connectedness and Community in Broadcast Media

Hope Jensen Schau, Temple University
Cristel A. Russell, San Diego State University

SESSION OVERVIEW

The concept of consumers developing relationships with brands has been well-documented in consumer research. Seminal work on this topic established that brands can serve as active relationship partners and serve as a basis for various types of consumer-brand relationships (Fournier 1998). Work evolving from this perspective has shown that such consumer-brand relationships also serve as the basis for the formation of brand communities, a fabric of relationships based on personal connections to specific brands (Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002). Additionally, it has been shown that there is a reciprocal relationship between consumers and brands. More specifically, not only do consumers seek interpersonal relationships that reinforce their relationships with brands, but they may develop self-brand connections as a means of affiliating themselves with reference groups (Escalas and Bettman, 2003).

This session contributes to extant research by applying the concept of consumer-brand relationships to the context of the television consumption. While it has been proposed that consumers form relationships with TV programs and the characters in those programs (Russell and Puto 1999), research in this session examines this proposition in greater depth. Expanding our knowledge of television audiences beyond Nielsen aggregate analysis to the level of individual consumers and program-related communities of viewers, this session taps into consumer motivations and socialization, consumption stories, and the extension and creation of the TV program as a brand experience.

Cristel Russell and Andrew Norman presented a study on the relationship between program consumption and social interaction. Within the social network of a sorority house, they examine the interplay of the consumption of and connectedness to TV programs and interpersonal relationships. Mary Wolfenbarger and Hope Jensen Schau demonstrated the manner in which *The Simpsons* viewers bond in online communities through subversively explicating American notions of hyper-commercialization and commodity fetishism. Among active *The Simpsons* fans the brand experience is intricately informed by cultural critique, often including parodies of marketing and consumer behavior. Hope Jensen Schau and Albert M. Muñiz, Jr. examined a particular consumer-generated subtext of the former television series *Xena: Warrior Princess* to find how proponents of mainstream and subtext interpretations interact and impact the *Xena* brand. They find the *Xena* community is held together by a delicate dance of ambiguity that supports multiple interpretations of the relationship between Xena and Gabrielle. Finally, Mary C. Gilly, as the discussant, provided a critical perspective on the notion of connectivity as a specific consumption experience and discussed its potential in advancing our understanding of consumer behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

"Exploring the Relationship between Television Program Connectedness and Social Network Dynamics."

Cristel A. Russell, San Diego State University

Andrew T. Norman, Drake University

This presentation focused on the socialization process that occurs around the viewing of a television series. We investigated

this phenomenon by exploring brand communities that form around specific television programs. Watching television may be one of the most common social consumption events. Television has been referred to as a "lubricant to interpersonal communications" (Lee and Lee 1995). In particular, favorite TV programs are often watched regularly by groups of individuals and may serve as social bonds to others. Viewers might watch certain TV programs merely for their social utility (Morley 1980), providing a topic of discussion with other viewers during or after the airing of a program (Rubin and Perse 1987). Because of their recurrence, TV series may become ritualized events and extend beyond the mere watching experience, with preparation and follow-up activities (Russell and Puto 1999). Subcultures of consumption sometimes develop around television programs, with their rituals, paraphernalia, and participation in collective activities such as fan groups, conventions, and on the Internet (Kozinets 2001, Fiske 1992; Lewis 1991).

Research on subcultures of consumption and brand communities (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002) suggests that a strong bond between a person and a TV program and its characters may serve as the basis for interpersonal interaction and social cohesion. Empirical evidence shows that, as an individual becomes more connected with a given show, she/he will not only have a greater opportunity for social interaction around the program, but will also be more likely to seek out interactions with other viewers of the same program (Russell, Norman and Heckler 2004). Russell and Puto (1999) also emphasized the social embeddedness of the television experience and the importance of relationships within the community of viewers. Not only may viewers develop relationships with their programs, and even para-social relationships with the characters in the programs, but they may also use the TV program as a way to develop or maintain social relationships with other viewers (Frenzen & Davis, 1990).

The horizontal embeddedness of TV consumption and its relationship to previous research on connectedness was the focus of this research project. We reported the results of a study conducted with 28 college females living in a sorority house. These individuals reportedly gathered together at least once a week to watch a TV series, thereby providing us an opportunity to study TV consumption and connectedness in a real and relatively "close" social network of TV consumers. We administered an extensive survey to the participants. After providing information regarding their own personal history with the TV show, the respondents indicated their level of connectedness to the selected program as well as to another TV show of their choice. They also completed an extensive set of measures assessing the strength of their ties with each other sorority member and the level of their interpersonal interaction related to TV programming with each other sorority member.

Much like other studies conducted in fraternity or sorority houses (Reingen, Foster, Brown, and Seidman 1984; Ward and Reingen 1990), our findings provided a unique view of a well-defined subculture which represents a microcosm of television consumption as a whole. While all the respondents reported watching the show, the degree to which they connected to it varied. Within the complex social network of the sorority, we were able to identify pods of viewers of equivalent connectedness and levels similar patterns of TV-related interactions. Opinion leaders also became apparent loci of influence on other sorority members.

**“Bonding through Cultural Subversion: Consumers’
Connectedness with the *The Simpsons*”**

Mary Finley Wolfinbarger, California State University Long
Beach

Hope Jensen Schau, Temple University

The television program, *The Simpsons*, is one of the longest running sitcoms in television history. Initially airing as short comedic sketches in a cartoon format on the Tracey Ullman Show in 1987, the show has earned both harsh criticism for its portrayal of a decidedly dysfunctional American family and alternatively praise for being the most “realistic” show on television (Rapping 1992) and the best television program of the century (Time 1999). Throughout 300+ episodes, *The Simpsons* has remained an “edgy” program, challenging the boundaries and norms of American popular culture and actively parodying the hyper-commercialization and commodity fetishism of Western, specifically American societies. So enduringly popular is the show that, Simpson-isms, like Homer’s “D’oh!” and Mr. Burns’ “Excellent” creep into the common parlance of American speech and are decoded with agility by viewers and nonviewers alike. Additionally, there is a proliferation of show images, screen savers, sound bites, avatars, and cellular phone ring tones associated with the show and theme song. In opposition to the fickle nature of most television trends, books declaring Homer Simpson to be an epic hero with his own philosophy (“The Philosophy of D’oh!”) and definitive show episode guides continue to be produced and sold (Mulhauser 2001).

Although the program has special appeal to the “jaded” mindsets of Generation X and Y (McClellan 1992) the show has a strong and growing multi-generational fan base. In syndication, *The Simpsons* enjoys an expanded audience as younger children are exposed to the early episodes and international markets air the program to fresh viewers. So, what accounts for its popularity and why are the characters and plotlines resonating with consumers? This research examines the subversive nature of the plots and characters of *The Simpsons* and more specifically addresses the consumer response to, identification with, and overall connectedness to (Russell, Norman and Heckler 2004) the program and its characters as a playful enactment of subversion, particularly in reference to the behavior of marketers and consumers.

With the expansion of internet access, broadband options, and consumer adoption of these technologies, an enormous amount of consumer-generated commentary exists online regarding *The Simpsons*. Active and resilient online communities revolving around the show, its characters, setting, and plots exist in several languages (English, Spanish, German, French, Swedish, etc.) and are hosted on resources in multiple countries. This enhanced consumer interaction provides insight beyond the aggregate data Nielsen can provide on audiences, to actual individual consumer interaction with all aspects of the program. Similar to recent consumer research on *Star Trek*, this study focuses on the online fan interactions and on the program content that serves as stimulus (Kozinets 2001). Noting an obvious selection bias, those who engage in *The Simpsons’* communities online are highly involved consumers, but also are likely to reflect resonating themes of connectedness across a vast array of more casual consumers (Schlosser 2003).

Treating *The Simpsons* as a phenomenon, this research regards the program as a brand (complete with its own nearly inexhaustible list of licensed merchandise), its fan communities as brand communities (Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001), and the fan sites inspired by the show as acts of consumption (Schau and Gilly 2003). Through analysis of the episodes, the official website (www.thesimpsons.com), two independent English language discussion boards where fans frequently interact with each other

regarding episode content, and personal websites containing *The Simpsons’* content, we find that the identification with, and connectedness to, the show revolve around the theme of subversive commentary that nevertheless often affirms traditional values and embraces the status quo, warts and all. The show and fan discussions serve as cathartic platforms for both serious, pointed critiques and affectionate acceptance of the tensions inherent in American values and norms.

The program content is itself a critical resource in understanding consumer and marketer behavior. Episodes of *The Simpsons* contain humorous, highly commercialized depictions of social contexts and distinctly marketing-oriented themes. For example, each episode includes Maggie getting run over the price scanner at the grocery store; Krusty the Clown actively marketing low quality merchandise bearing his image and seeking to bypass parental decision makers; and Duff beer’s promotional efforts pervade plotlines (“Duffman never dies, only the actors who play him”). In fact, even the godly Ned Flanders has owned a niche market store for left-handed appliances (the Leftorium) promoted by Homer’s word-of-mouth campaign; as well, Ned briefly operated an ill-fated religious theme park in tribute to his deceased spouse, Maude. All participants in the marketing system are routinely parodied, including big business (the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant), smaller businesses (the Kwik-E-Mart and Moe’s Bar), consumers (e.g. Marge buying 15 pounds of Nutmeg to save money at the local discounter), consumer movements (e.g. Marge’s crusade against “Big Sugar”), marketing researchers (e.g. Springfield Elementary is covertly taken over to provide continuous feedback to a toy manufacturer) and advertisers (e.g. Itchy and Scratchy’s violent ad for a cereal branded as “Stabby-Ohs”).

Consumer reactions to the program reflect the fact that the sarcastic and critical stance of the program resonates with viewers who easily recite the episode content, incorporate it into their belief structures and ideology (Cantor 1999), and engage in prolonged discussions and debates surrounding program content and peer commentary. Initial findings reveal that while the show is a cartoon, consumers tune in and interact with it on a deeper socio-cultural and political level; for example, the statement “*Life Imitates Bart*” in postings serves as a signal that daily news and events prove the relevance of *The Simpsons*. Thus, Springfield and its inhabitants are stand-ins for the world consumers occupy in real life and the issues presented in the program become vehicles for larger social dialog. Participants are at times competitive, with each post seeking to be more clever and creative than previous posts to a discussion. Our analysis finds that these dialogs, like the show itself, critically explicate American social norms, including norms of business and consumer behavior, and are both subversive and affectionate. In fact, we argue that enjoyable subversion is the dominant consumer motivation for active participation in the online brand community.

**“If You Can’t Find It, Create It: An Analysis of Consumer
Engagement with *Xena: Warrior Princess* and the Creation of
Consumer-generated Subtext”**

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With an absence of strong, female action heroines and a dearth of lesbian themed programming in mainstream American media, it is not surprising that a resourceful consumer group would reinvent a show to accommodate both. Although similar in intent to the reframing of *Ikea* (Ritson, Elliott and Eccles 1996), the execution is considerably more subtle and durable for *Xena*. We find that fans of the television show *Xena: Warrior Princess* reframe the characters *Xena* and *Gabrielle* and the show’s plots to suit their needs.

Noteworthy is that the program ceased production in June 2001, yet enjoys a dynamic consumer-driven community both online and offline.

Treating the program as the research focal point (Kozinets 2002), the interactions of the fan base factions as evidence of a thriving brand community (Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001), and the fan websites as acts of consumption (Schau and Gilly 2003), this research tackles the tension between corporate and consumer control (Kates 1997) of the *Xena* brand. Specifically, we examine the birth and persistence of a community devoted to an interpretive reading of *Xena: Warrior Princess* as a lesbian love story between the medieval, heroic Xena and her omni-present, ever-cheerful sidekick and scribe, Gabrielle. Moreover, we investigate the impact this community has on the perception of the *Xena* brand by the mainstream fan base.

The lesbian subtext is not merely a reinterpretation of the literal plot and characters, but includes fan-written fiction (short stories and novellas), teleplays (consumer-written episodes fans wish had been produced), manipulated and enhanced photographic images of the characters engaged in romantic and lustful behaviors, animated renditions of consumer-imagined character interactions, and discussion threads revolving around these consumer-generated texts and pictures. Although no official endorsement exists from the studio, the actress who played Xena, Lucy Lawless, has publicly acknowledged, albeit with ambiguous acceptance, the lesbian subtext as "one possible way to interpret the show." It is also believed that the writers in very subtle ways gave fodder to the subtext through ambiguous scripting and directing. Our research suggests that it is this complex dance of ambiguity that keeps the factions in check and the *Xena* brand alive and strong, unfettered by potentially damaging, homophobic rejoinders.

The data for this project are culled from: 1) the television show content, 2) the mainstream brand community (defined as the official discussion board, personal websites, webring and offline conventions), the subtext community (as manifested online and offline). Both researchers have examined episodes of the show, the official online websites, fan websites, and the discussion threads associated with the subtext. The first author attended a large Xena convention in the East Coast region of United States to further witness the community interaction offline, the tension between the factions, and the impact of the divergent interpretations on the *Xena* phenomenon. The motivation of this project was to determine how mainstream consumers cope with the subtext and how the subtext impacts the *Xena* brand. Recognizing that consumers can and do form active relationships with brands (Fournier 1998), we analyze how the same characters (Xena and Gabrielle) can sustain such divergent interpretations of their feelings, intent and behavior, while maintaining core, universal identity attributes (heroic, honorable, empathetic).

Initial findings reveal the subtext is tacitly acknowledged by the mainstream community as a titillating piece of *Xena* trivia, but is not seriously endorsed or validated by mainstream *Xena* fans. Consumer-generated commentary from both *Xena* camps indicates that this ambiguity allows discrepant interpretations and loci of connectedness (Russell, Norman and Heckler 2004) to co-exist and protects the brand from lesbian associations commingling with their heterosexual viewer segment. Similar to research on the Apple's discontinued PDA, the Newton (Muñiz and Schau 2002), we assert that the fact that the program is a discontinued product (no new shows are being made) aids in the maintenance of the subtext because the corporate interpretation yields to consumer-driven, consumer-controlled dialogs. In essence, the studio does not contribute to the debate in any form, allowing the factions to create

equally authentic interpretations because neither is formally deemed inauthentic by the *Xena* studio, cast, writers or producers. Had the show continued, perhaps the *Xena* producers would have been forced to take a formal stance on the subtext issue, potentially invalidating one faction and alienating consumers; thankfully the authentication never took place. Through maintaining an open text approach to *Xena*, both consumer factions can claim equal validity, hence Xena enjoys an expanded fan base.

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Exploring the Architecture of Contemporary American Foodways

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INTRODUCTION

“Food, at the base of civilization, contains deep, multi-layered meanings. Since it is such a strong component and shaper of identity whether on the level of family, community, ethnicity, class, religion, region, or other entity, food is deeply enmeshed in a collective as well as an individual sense of identity. Whether unprocessed or minimally processed foods (wheat, cooking oil), industrially manufactured items (Coca-Cola or Gerber baby food), or hand-made creations (tamales, holiday cookies), people imbue particular foods with meaning and emotion, regardless of whether they are involved in its production or merely its consumption. How and why these foods accrue special meaning—what makes them unique to particular groups of people—can vary widely: method of preparation, long-held tradition, particular ‘flavour principles,’ perception of purity, religious or political significance, signification of wealth or status, or any combination of factors.”

Bentley (2001)

Food has been studied as an anthropological classifier, signifier and identifier from the 1960’s onward (Balfet 1975; Douglas 1970, 1982, 1984; Levi-Strauss 1970, 1973, 1978). And even prior to that, food consumption and food preparation served as objects of study for economists and historians (Lucia 1963; Potter 1954; Simoons 1961). From this body of inquiry it has become clear that food and foodways play an important role in signifying various forms of social order (Bourdieu 1979). For example, seating arrangements, table manners, the utensils used to prepare, serve and consume food, as well as the actual foods eaten, can serve as rhetorical indicators of familial membership, age and gender statuses, socio-economic position and ethnic affiliation (see e.g., Burnett 1968; Counihan and Kaplan 1998; Lewis 1989; Merrell 1985; Wallendorf and Arnould 1991).

Foodstuffs further serve as hierarchical continua of social prestige and power; with access to certain foods (e.g., meat) or drinks (e.g., wine) being reserved for those occupying certain levels of power and privilege (e.g., Barthes 1970; Bourdieu 1979; Korsmeyer 1999; Mintz 1986; Warde 1997). Finally, food and foodways have also been scientized—recast as nutrients, calories, lipids, carbohydrates, proteins and vitamins—a modernist effort to legitimate their study and quantify their utility to society (e.g., Barnes and Shapin 1979; Caplan 1997; Kamminga and Cunningham 1995; Macintosh 1996; McCollum and Simmons 1929; Simmons 1929).

PURPOSE

Our present purpose is to explore these bases of food meaning in an exploratory and modest way among contemporary Americans. In particular, we are interested in the naturalized categories and hierarchies that are currently present in American society. Thus, we do not focus on food consumption micro-cultures (e.g., Thompson and Troester 2002) or on specific food consumption events (e.g., Wallendorf and Arnould 1991). Rather we are looking for culturally resonant categories and labeling devices that are used by consumers to ‘make sense’ of food.

METHOD

For this exploratory phase of our research, depth interviews were conducted with five men and four women ranging in age from 17 to 45. Participants were from the Working, Lower Middle and Upper Middle social classes. Ethnicities included Italian, Latino and Irish, although all were from second, third or beyond generations. These informants, therefore, would not be able to reflect variations in food classifications among, say, African-Americans, Muslim-Americans, Korean-Americans or persons who had recently immigrated to the United States. Interviews were conducted at the participant’s home, under conditions of informed consent and anonymity, and were audiotaped. Interview length ranged from 45 minutes to two hours and topics ranged across a variety of food practices/norms. Interview format differed slightly from traditional depth/phenomenological techniques (see Thompson and Troester 2002) in that we did not have participants recount specific food consumption events as a means of eliciting their individualized narratives. Rather, because our focus was upon macro-cultural categorization schema, we would introduce an organizing concept suggested by prior research on food (e.g., male/female foods) and have the participants comment on it by expressing their personal experiences with and exemplars of the category. As will be discussed in the Analysis section, this approach proved to be fruitful.

INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS

Following standard interpretive procedure for depth interviews, each transcript was read several times; as the readings progressed, categorical commonalities regarding foodways were detected and noted in marginal commentary. Ultimately, individual passages were identified and matched to an overarching structure of categorization “nodes.” We viewed this overarching structure as a preliminary version of the architecture of American foodways; that is, as a culturally grounded model that represents the interrelated meanings that foodways have for American consumers. This preliminary model is shown in Figure 1; and the discussion below addresses each major aspect of it.

Non-hierarchical Cultural Distinctions

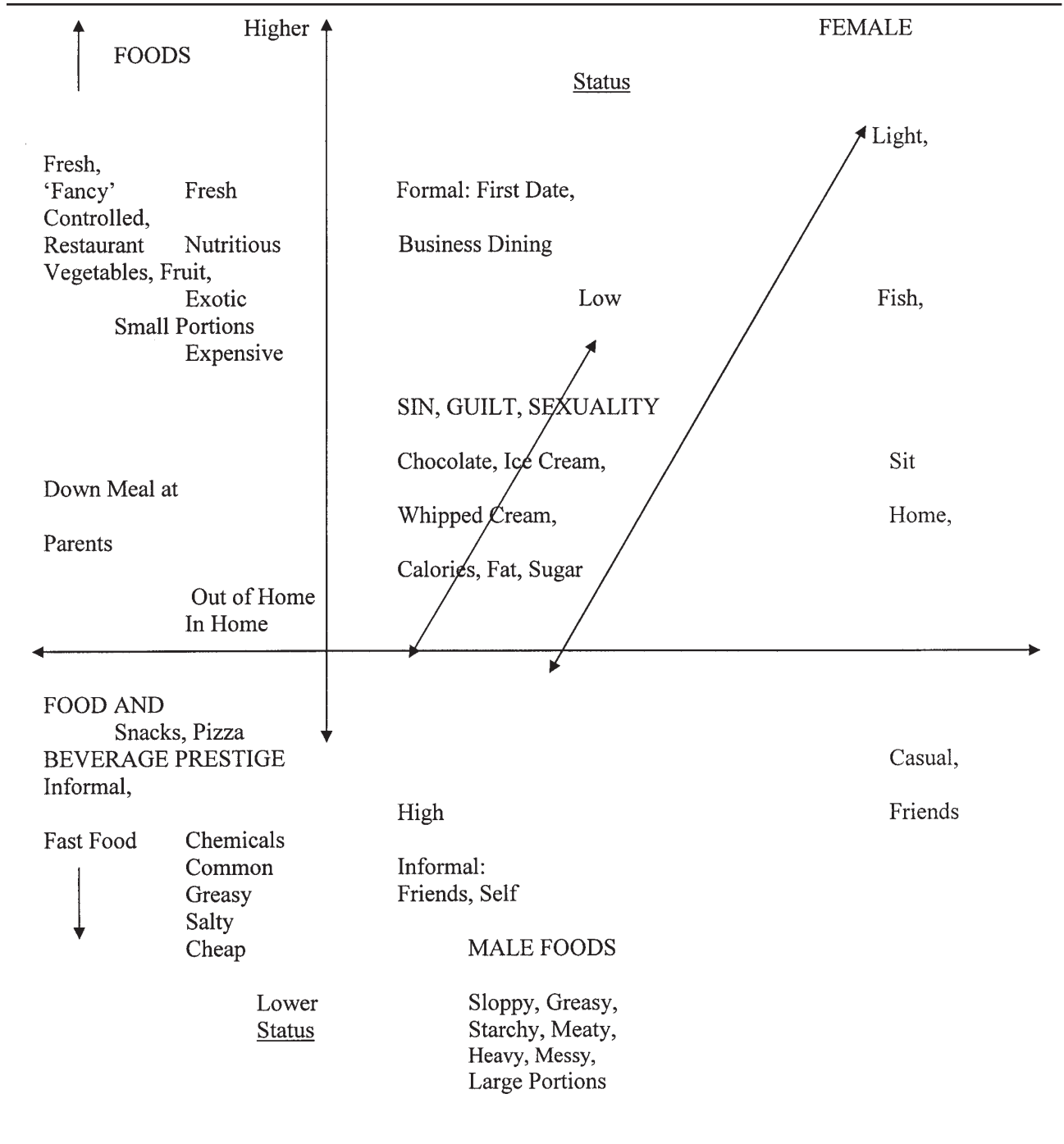
Although parts of our architectural rendering are hierarchical continua (e.g., social class), others are not, and we will address these uni-level dichotomies first.

In-Home/Out-of-Home

One important uni-level distinction consumers made was between eating food *in their homes* versus eating food *outside of their homes*; outside areas could include special events, e.g., weddings, picnics, restaurant meals, or common events such as snacks eaten ‘on the run.’ Cross-cutting this basic In/Out dichotomy were modifiers/contextualizers such as Formal or Informal, Necessity or Pleasure, Snack or Full Meal, and Cheap or Expensive.

For example, for some informants, *every* meal eaten out of the home was special, because it happened so rarely:

FIGURE 1
The Architecture of American Foodways: An Exploratory Model



“I can probably count the times I’ve gone out to eat. More so now; I’ve gone out to eat at restaurants now; but when I was growing up [it was] always a home cooked meal.... We never went to restaurants” (Angela).

“When I go out to eat, I think of food as enjoyment, yeah. For the most part at home it’s pretty much a necessity.... Almost every time I eat out it’s for enjoyment, unless it’s like work-related” (Nick).

Messy, Sloppy vs. Controlled

Our participants dichotomized sharply between food consumed outside the home with friends versus food consumed outside with co-workers, dates or bosses. With friends with whom they felt comfortable and at ease, eating ‘outside’ was frequently an opportunity for feasting, rowdiness, sloppy table manners and release from norms of self-control. Diets, concerns about the nutritional quality of the food and etiquette about food portions, messiness or ‘becoming dirty’ were abandoned.

“We eat whatever we want. When me and Gina go out we usually order an appetizer and split it; something like nachos; it doesn’t matter. It could be messy, gross food” (Joellen).

“This is really bad, but... something fried and disgusting like mozzarella sticks; maybe chicken caesar salads we eat a lot, or bagels....” (Lena).

Frank, below, cites several norms governing ‘eating out’ with male friends at a sports event:

F: Yeah, it depends... like tailgating a game you gotta have subs [submarine sandwiches].

I: What kind of subs?

F: Whatever you want, whatever your preference is. You gotta have beer usually.

I: What kind of beer?

F: Cheap, American, domestic beer.

I: Really.

F: In cans. (Laughs.)

I: Not imported?

F: Not imported.

I: And not bottles?

F: Not bottles, it’s not for a tailgate. I guess you could have bottles.

I: Bottles are okay?

F: Yeah, bottles are okay, but if it was me I would get cans.

I: It’s got to be cheap?

F: It’s got to be cheap, especially at a football game.... Like Monday night football, or the Super Bowl, you get chicken wings.

I: What about for a regular season game.

F: The same thing. Not baseball though.

I: Basketball?

F: No.

I: Hockey?

F: Nope, maybe like pizza is universal for all sports [and] chicken wings.

I: I thought chicken wings was only football.

F: No, it’s primarily football, but like I guess you eat the same things as long as you’re going to the game, what kind of game—it doesn’t really matter.

I: You eat the same things as when you’re at the game? Tonight’s football game? You’re at the stadium.

F: Tonight’s football game? I’d get a sub. We’d hang outside for a little while, have a sub, drink a couple of beers.

I: And when you’re in a stadium, do you get any food?

F: No, no I don’t get any food.

I: Why not?

F: For one it’s the price. I refuse to pay the price in the stadium.

I: What’s the price in the stadium?

F: Last time I think it was a hot dog was \$5.25, something like that. I’m not paying that.

I: Would you drink a beer in the stadium?

F: I refuse to pay those prices too. But sometimes you need a beer, and you make a compromise with yourself, but [I’m] definitely not going there and buying beers if I can avoid it.

I: And you mentioned pizza, that goes for all sports?

F: Yeah, definitely, that’s more universal than chicken wings.

Conversely, “eating out” with first dates, co-workers and superiors was described as restrictive. Etiquette was strictly observed, small portions of “clean,” easy to eat food were consumed, and food was not touched or handled. Sauces or gravies that might

splatter or create a “mess” were avoided; as was alcohol, lest one lose self-control.

“If you’re with your boss, you’ll probably tend to watch what you say and try to eat a certain way and look professional” (Lena).

“If I was with someone I just started dating, it would be different than with a [long-term] boyfriend... it wouldn’t be anything messy.... If it was someone I hardly knew, girl or guy, I would be more cautious. I wouldn’t order spaghetti or even a salad; salads are kind of messy. I would be more likely to have coffee after dinner instead of chocolate cake.... I would try to order something more tasteful or classy. I probably wouldn’t eat it all.... I would try to eat slower, not talk with my mouth full, not make a mess of my plate....” (Joellen).

I would not get anything I had to touch with my fingers or hands. I would probably get chicken or seafood. I wouldn’t eat pasta or anything messy... [I’d get] something that would be very easy for me to eat” (Nick).

Food at Home

Food prepared at home was usually described by our participants as “thrown together,” “easy,” “just to eat something,” “simple” and frequently “sloppy.” Those who often ate at home by themselves tended to eat ‘snack’ foods, which they described as ready-made (microwave meals), sandwiches or even cereal (for dinner). Television often served as a companion for these meals. As one informant put it: “When the tv is on, I’m *not* eating alone.” Another described the tv accompaniment to his at-home meals as being “like a beverage.”

A secondary classificatory device for at-home dining was “sitting down” to a “full meal.” This was used to reference a multi-course meal, served to multiple family members and served at the “appropriate” mealtime. Underlying this was the iconic image of a large family, gathered around a dining table, eating and talking together over an extended period of time. Usually the mother of the family would prepare the meal, often using ‘favorite’ or ‘traditional’ recipes. Among our participants, such sitdown-full-meals were the exception, rather than the norm; but they were idealized as a ‘good’ way to eat or the ‘right’ way to eat (see also Wallendorf and Arnould 1991).

“I miss sitting down at meals, like on Sunday which was always a big meal.... We don’t even do that anymore because we are so spread out all over the place. I miss those big meals, just talking with everybody. Eating on the run sucks.... Every night [at] 6 o’clock we used to sit down. We all knew that was dinnertime; for an hour [from] 6 to 7. Now everybody eats 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, whenever they get in from doing something” (Angelina).

FOOD QUALITY/NUTRITION HIERARCHIES

As depicted in Figure One, there was consonance between the hierarchical continua of food quality, as associated with socioeconomic status, and cultural notions of sound nutrition, especially when nutrition was cast as embodying scientized food notions such as the proportion of carbohydrates, lipids and proteins in one’s diet, food freshness, and the presence/absence of preservatives, sodium, and sugars in foodstuffs (see also Thompson and Troester 2002). In general, our participants saw social class positively correlated with nutrition, such that “affluent” or “upper class” persons ate more nutritious or ‘healthier’ foods. However, this correlation was not

perfect or comprehensive. Upper class persons were also seen as eating more exotic or unusual foods, such as caviar, which were not viewed as being nutritious/healthy. However, the correlation at the lower end of the continua did seem to approach both 100% and complete comprehension, in that poorer/lower class persons were consistently seen as eating poor quality, non-nutritious foods.

More specifically, as will be documented through excerpts below, our informants associated higher levels of protein, red meat, seafood, and fresh vegetable consumption with higher levels of affluence. Conversely poorer consumers were characterized as eating foods that were salty, greasy, filling, starchy, carbohydrate-laden, processed with chemicals and preservatives, high in calories, low in nutrition, and available as “fast food” or as “snacks.”

“Upper class food is food that’s not greasy; food that’s like fresh, and probably expensive. Lower class food is like fast food or just thrown together... just not healthy” (Sean).

“What are some high status foods?”

“Caviar. It shows that you have money. It’s probably gross and doesn’t even taste good, but it’s expensive. Low-budget foods are stuff like Ramen noodles that cost like 10 cents per package. Usually low-status foods are ones that are really bad for you.... They are filled with salt, and MSG and crap. Macaroni and cheese in a box where it’s filled with chemicals. Filet mignon would be a higher-status food. Some restaurants have duck or other weird stuff on the menu; that would be a more expensive restaurant” (Joellen).

“Honey Dijon [mustard]. Grey Poupon [mustard]. If you go to a fancy restaurant, they will use a fancy name for chicken.... It goes hand-in-hand with price. Steak and prime rib would be higher class, and lower class would be hamburgers” (Erwin).

“Well, I think rich people generally have fresher food, food that would be harder to get or cost more money to get absolutely fresh, especially a lot of fresh produce like salad. All the extras would be included in the salad too, stuff like fancy olives and mushrooms. I could see a lot of fresh fruit too and not just oranges and the typical stuff you see but the more exotic stuff like kiwis and, umm, pineapples.... Probably more seafood also which is, well some of it is healthy, some of it is having a lot cholesterol, but anyway I think you would see more of that.... At a poor person’s house, I could see there being a lot of the “fillers” like pasta and bread and more fattening types of food. Something where they (the poor people) could feed a lot of them for the money, pasta goes a long way, rice goes a long way...” (Joni).

As Orlove (1994) notes, in many cultures higher status is associated with the consumption of protein-rich foods, especially ‘red’ meats, whereas bread, grains and other carbohydrate-rich foods are equated with lower status (and see also Barthes 1970).

GENDER AND SEXUALITY/FERTILITY

Scholliers (2001) describes his family’s concern that he rejected eating red meat as a child in Belgium, noting that his father likely viewed it as a rejection of masculinity. And analogously, our informants easily classified foods into masculine and feminine categories. Associated with males and maleness were foods such as meat, especially beef muscle, starches such as potatoes, fats and fried foods, sandwiches (especially large, cumbersome ones), and alcohol, particularly beer and distilled liquors. Men were also

viewed as eating larger portions of food, usually in a sloppy, messy and out-of-control manner. They were deemed to be more frequent patrons of “fast food” restaurants and “junk food” snacks. The eating habits of adult males were often equated with those of children or even animals: dirty, sloppy, hand-to-mouth, out of control.

Conversely, our participants described women’s typical foods as “white/light” meat (e.g., chicken, especially breast filets, fish), leafy vegetables, often eaten uncooked as in a salad, and fresh fruits. Women and girls were characterized as using proper utensils to eat their food, avoiding making a mess or getting “dirty” from spattered food, and maintaining better control over the size of bites and overall portions of the foods they consumed. Clearly, these food stereotypes echo widespread gender categorization schemas (see e.g., Counihan and Kaplan 1998).

Erwin, when asked about what foods a man and woman might like to eat, responded:

“Steak and beer is always for men. I’m not sure for women.... [Maybe] chicken. It’s not messy and it’s not heavy.... A girl doesn’t want to get messy on a first date.”

Frank gave a similar response:

“I think a prime example of a guy food is steak. Meat and potatoes.... [For women] something vegetarian.”

I.: “What about a woman eating a steak?”

F: “I think that’s cool, it’s very cool. I’m proud of a girl that can eat [steak].... That’s the kind of girl you’ve got to marry.”

As did Sean:

“Guys drink beer; girls drink wine. Guys [eat] steak, girls [eat] seafood.”

The women to whom we spoke presented the same gender characterizations:

“Well guys definitely tend to drink beer more than girls do and maybe they tend to eat more hamburgers and like steak. I think that guys tend to eat more than girls” (Lena).

“Probably guys would go for the red meats and stuff like that. Girls are more chicken eaters.... Pasta eaters.... I always envision guys eating sandwiches. Like big, huge sandwiches... and girls are more like vegetables and fruits.... My dad would always have a steak. At least twice a week my mom would make steaks for him. And my sister and me... would eat chicken, vegetables... where my father and brother would eat steaks and bread” (Joellen)

These metaphoric equivalences of course echo the gender norms that pervade most of American culture. Women are deemed lighter, more genteel, more fragile than men, therefore requiring less aggressive fare. Men, viewed as warriors and laborers, are believed to require the strength and body mass provided by muscle meats and starches (see e.g., Counihan and Kaplan 1998; Lakoff 1987; Orlove 1997).

Fertility/Sexuality

Related to these gendered food categories are beliefs about fertility and sexuality that are also linked to particular foods. Given Americans’ conflicted feelings about their sexuality, most of our informants mixed notions of sexuality with not only concepts of

gender, but also with feelings of sin, guilt and indulgence/pleasure. Like food, sexuality tempts us to consume “the forbidden,” to abandon self-control. In particular, chocolate was seen as an aphrodisiac for women. Fruits – sweet, juicy and fed from hand to mouth – were also characterized as sexual stimulants. And whipped cream, requiring licking and filled with fat and sugar, was viewed as a sexual metaphor.

“Chocolate covered strawberries you can actually feed to somebody and that’s always fun.... Champagne and wine....” (Sean).

“Strawberries, champagne, wine, whipped cream, ice cream.... They’re sweet, they taste good and, of course, with champagne you get a little tipsy” (Lena).

“Ice cream, hot fudge, chocolate covered strawberries.... Stuff that melts” (Angela).

“Grapes could be sexual.... I’ve seen scenes where people are laying naked eating grapes, or the woman is feeding the man grapes....” (Joni).

“I think most of fruit... juicy fruits or just very ripe fruits like strawberries or peaches... soft type foods... chocolate... and things that are very sweet” (Nick).

From prior discussion, we can see that most of these associations are with “feminine” foods that either represent the female body (e.g., peaches) or represent reproduction/fertility (grapes). Americans’ notions of sinfulness and sexuality are seen in “bad but delicious” foods such as chocolate, ice cream and whipped cream.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The present exploratory study has outlined some of the architecture underlying American food beliefs and practices. Clearly, this effort is quite preliminary and much more detailed excavation of American foodways is required. Shown in our tentative model but left unaddressed in this brief report are such category schema as food *seasonality*, both in content and preparation. For example, summer is not only associated with the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables, but also with outdoor meal preparation and consumption (picnics, hiking, grilling). Conversely, winter may be culturally associated with heavier foods, such as stews, casseroles, pastries, potatoes that create a sense of warmth, fullness and security. Notably, several feast-days, such as Christmas, Thanksgiving and New Years occur in the winter time and may have ancient roots in human concerns about maintaining sufficient food supplies to survive the barrenness of winter.

Also unexplored at present are consumers’ perceptions of food *ethnicity*, for example which foods are associated with particular racial and religious subcultures? How does this association influence how they are prepared, when they are consumed and who eats them?

With regard to ethnicity, foods can have positive and negative cultural associations that group members must deal with. For example, consuming watermelon and fried chicken is incorporated into negative stereotypes about African-Americans. Conversely, some groups have seen ethnically-identified foods ‘slip-away’ from being associated with a given ethnicity and become circulated in the wider culture; examples would include bagels, pita bread, sushi and salsa.

We also were not able to attend to issues of food taboos and segregation. Why are some foods, e.g., wine, coffee, not served to

American children when they are permitted in other cultures? Why are foods typically eaten in a given order, e.g., salad, meat and starch, sweet dessert? Are there social taboos that operate to prevent specific genders from eating given foods (e.g., females and raw beef)? Food marketers have had to deal with some of these restrictions when attempting to broaden the usage of particular items. For example, efforts (largely unsuccessful) were made to re-position orange juice as an all-day (not just breakfast) beverage. Iced tea has been more successfully re-positioned as a men’s beverage, by emphasizing its ‘briskness’ (=potency). Males still seem hesitant to accept salads as ‘meals’ however, and are likely more stigmatized if vegetarian, than are women.

And finally, we did not address iconic American foods, such as Coca Cola, McDonalds, Pizza Hut, potato chips, hot dogs and corn-on-the-cob, which may represent nonculinary cultural constructs such as democracy, materialism, leisure and modernity. Identifying the deeper aspects of American culture embodied in our foodstuffs (as seen both by Americans and non-Americans) would be a useful avenue to comprehending our national image. Why are we the Fast Food Nation? And, what does this signify? Why has the term ‘McDonaldization’ come into play in cultural discourse? What are the positive and negative meanings of Coca Cola as an icon of America? Obviously, there is an enormous terrain of food meaning available for exploration by consumer researchers, which we have not touched upon in the present effort.

Despite these omissions, however, we believe that the initial mapping shown in Figure One may be of benefit to consumer researchers, especially in the area of gender studies. For example, our model suggests that “fancy restaurants” and sit down dinners at home may both be seen as somewhat more feminine, due to elements of self control and formality. Conversely, snacking and fast food dining seem to both evoke maleness, because they are seen as inherently dirty, messy, uncontrolled and somewhat ‘bad for you.’ Read in this way, sexual foods may also evoke aspects of maleness because they represent a loss of control, eating with hands, high caloric content and messiness.

We hope this initial effort is helpful and may stimulate additional inquiry into this under-studied area.

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Extreme Foods: Expanding the Boundaries of Taste

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore variations in individuals' food preferences as examined through an analysis of people's encounters with new and unusual food. The theoretical foundation of this study is the omnivore's paradox (Fischler 1980, 1988; Rozin 1976), which juxtaposes the attraction and distrust with which human beings (and other omnivores) approach new foods. The main thesis of the "omnivore's paradox" is that the survival of omnivores depends on a predisposition to seek novelty and variety (neophilia), juxtaposed with a natural distrust of the unfamiliar (neophobia). In an evolving world, the durability of a species depends on its ability to adapt to the changes in its environment. Still, at the same time, the omnivorous creature must operate caution as it samples new options, taking care not to introduce harmful or poisonous substances into its system.

In the U.S. today we are exposed to an unprecedented variety of food, due to agricultural and commercial innovations, improved transportation and distribution systems, and global trade. According to Rozin (1999), we currently know very little about how people acquire food preferences. Individuals are born into a culture of biological and cultural tastes, and while socialization surely plays an important role in the acquisition of tastes, the correlation between the food preferences of parents and their adult offspring has been shown to be surprisingly low (Rozin 1991). The phenomenon by which consumers enlist tactics to protect themselves and their families from unsafe food in the face of an environment of increasing food choice has been called "strategies of confidence" (Sellerberg 1991) or "coping strategies" (Beardsworth and Keil 1997). These analyses provide important insight in addressing how consumers evaluate the safety hazards of unknown foods in the face of food risks, such as GM foods and Mad Cow Disease. However, in addition to food safety, there are surely other dimensions that consumers evaluate when encountering new and unusual food items that are also important to recognize.

The main focus of this study is the experiences of consumers with new and unusual foods. Data for this study were analyzed from transcripts of 250 face-to-face interviews. The semi-structured interviews were conducted by trained undergraduate students of a large midwestern public university, with the aid of an interview guide. The interview transcripts were systematically analyzed, and the findings of the research were organized around three central questions that emerged from the depth interviews. How do consumers define "extreme" foods? What are the meanings that consumers derive from eating or avoiding "extreme" foods? Under what conditions are consumers most likely to sample "extreme" foods, and how do consumers characterize these experiences?

The findings show that the list of foods that U. S. consumers consider to be "extreme" is highly individualistic, but commonly includes endangered animals, animals that are viewed as pets, game, animal organs, raw meat, spicy foods, and odd food combinations. While the demarcation of edible and nonedible is too diverse and idiosyncratic to provide easy categorization, bipolar characteristics that seem to aid consumers in classifying foods according to edibility include familiar/nonfamiliar, safe/unsafe, and bland/spicy. How consumers approach food that they consider unusual depends on individual evaluations and characteristics as informed by social forces. In particular, the meanings derived by experiences with unusual foods are influenced by the degree to which the consumers view the tasting of new foods as an adventure,

the extent to which the consumer can feel safe ingesting the food, and the raw emotions evoked by the encounters with the food.

An individual characteristic that appears to be of paramount importance in every encounter with new foods is the extent to which a consumer is a neophilic who embraces novel food items or a neophobic who avoids unknown foods. The findings seem to indicate that this characteristic is more of a dichotomous trait than one of gradation, as most respondents readily self-classified themselves into one of the two extreme positions of "willing to try anything" or "picky." Neophilic consumers are more likely to view unusual foods in a positive light and to embrace situations involving new foods as "adventures." Neophobic consumers, on the other hand, view unfamiliar foods with disgust and purposely avoid events in which they might be expected to taste unusual foods.

The findings also shed light on conditions that result in changes in food tastes. The contexts in which consumers are most likely to encounter and sample new foods includes incidents involving travel, while dining in trusted restaurants, and during social events in which the consumer feels pressure to conform. As Fischler would predict, encounters with new food often involve an evaluation of food safety. Still, many experiences with novel foods occur in situations in which food safety anxieties must yield to more pressing concerns. In fact, as the findings show, many experiences in which people find themselves consuming unusual foods actually occur by accident. As such, the food preferences that people form from birth are altered and amended as they live out their lives while engaged in social relationships with others. Altogether, this study underscores the influence of psycho-social forces on food tastes, with neophilic/neophobic tendencies and the formation, maintenance, and alterations of identities and relationships informing encounters with novel foods.

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Consumer Trust and Distrust in the Food System: Some Implications for the Debates on Food Biotechnologies

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ABSTRACT

Biotechnology is considered to be one of the most influential revolutions, one far greater in its potential societal consequences than the computer, electronic or atomic revolutions. As with most revolutions, the public's view on the risks and benefits of the technology is divided. However, most scholars agree that public trust in social institutions and in the food system would be a central issue to understanding public attitudes toward the risks and benefits of food biotechnologies. To date, the nature of such trust has received little systematic empirical attention. This study provides a detailed look at consumer trust and distrust in social institutions and in food safety system. Theoretical significance and practical (public policy) implications of the findings are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The broad objective of the study is to investigate consumers' trust and distrust in the food system with respect to food safety and food biotechnologies (a.k.a. Genetically Modified Foods). Trust in the food system is considered to be a central issue for biotechnology debate; however, we do not know the nature and components of this trust and how it affects consumers' view of the food safety. Further, studies to date (both in food and other contexts) have investigated consumers' views on one institution at a time and in isolation. For example, some studies focus only on one institution such as a regulatory agency (e.g. Lazarus 1991; McGarity 1986) or universities (e.g. Rampton and Stauber 2001). Others studied a number of institutions (e.g. government, military, schools) in the same study and basically reported the degree of public trust in these institutions. No specific attempt was made to understand consumer perceptions of the interplays among various institutions that form the system. In other words, past research provides a detailed account of trust for one or more institutions (e.g. how trust in these institutions has changed over time) but does not explain, for example, how consumers' trust and distrust in various institutions may interact with each other and collectively contribute to beliefs about the trustworthiness of the "system." As a result, we do not know how individuals' positive and negative views and expectations of various components of a food system interact within the system to result in an overall view of the system. These knowledge gaps inhibit a complete understanding of the consumers' view of the food system with respect to biotechnology. This, in turn, may hamper any communication efforts for healthy public debate and resulting public policies.

Social scientists have argued that Americans' trust in social institutions has deteriorated over the last a few decades. More specifically, studies have reported that most Americans do not trust the government and governmental agencies (Epstein 1998), manufacturers and other big businesses (Bernstein 2000), universities (Rampton and Stauber 2001), science and scientists (Maddox 1995), etc. At the same time, it has been the common view among the authors in the popular press (e.g. Kilman 1999), and in the academic community (e.g. Hoban 1998; Mokhiber and Weissman 1999) that when it comes to views of biotechnology in general and genetically modified foods (GMF) in particular, most Americans are not concerned (i.e. they feel safe) about the food they purchase because they tend to trust their food supply (system). These views, however, may suggest a contradiction because as mentioned above, Americans, over the last a few decades, have become distrustful of various institutions including the government, manufacturers, me-

dia, etc. It appears that the issue of what American consumers' trust/distrust in the food supply (safety) system really means is not clear and perhaps underexamined. As a result, this study aims to answer questions such as can the food system be trusted, what does that trust/distrust mean, and how is that trust/distrust related to the components of the system. More specifically, the study asks is it possible that while individual components of a system (e.g. government, manufacturers, scientific community within the food system) cannot be trusted, the system as a whole can be? Is it possible that consumers feel their food is safe while they are suspicious about various actions of regulatory agencies, manufacturers, and scientists?

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Most studies on institutional and system trust have been carried out in sociology and political sciences. These studies have focused on citizen views of such institutions as media (e.g. Sperling 1997), big corporations (Bernstein 2000), science (e.g. Maddox 1995) and the government and governmental agencies (e.g. Rose and Mishler 1997). A Common characteristic of these studies is that they mostly report trust in a particular target (e.g. politicians or media) instead of taking a broader approach to study public trust and distrust. In order to understand consumer trust in the food system, one should investigate consumers' views of various institutions in the food system through a holistic approach. However, most research conducted with regard to institutional trust has either dealt with views of a particular institution (e.g. Abbott and Dalton 1999; Lazarus 1991; McGarity 1986; Renn and Levine 1991) or dealt with multiple institutions (in isolation) with no specific attempt to understand citizens' perceptions of the interactions between institutions (see Rose and Mishler 1997; World Values Survey 1984, 1993). Even though these studies provide in-depth understanding of the views about one particular institution, they fail to account for the complexities and the challenges that are associated with social systems.

Other studies have examined citizen views of various institutions within a country (e.g. Rose et al. 1997; World Values Survey 1984, 1993). The main objective in these studies was to monitor the changes in public confidence in various public and private institutions (e.g. police, legal system, armed forces, parliament, civil service, the church, major companies, and press). They provided detailed understanding about the impact of these changes on the overall performance of the studied countries. However, these studies reveal little information regarding how individuals' views of various institutions interact and/or how such interactions determine individuals' overall views of a particular system (such as the food system). Institutional trust studies (when they deal with individuals' views of various institutions in a system in a holistic manner) have the potential to provide detailed understanding of policy problems and their potential solutions. Through a holistic approach, one can look at individuals' views of various institutions and institutional interactions in complex systems of the society (e.g. the food system) and understand how trust and distrust are distributed and managed among these various institutions within the system.

Based on these points, in summary, the specific objectives of this study are to study consumer trust and distrust the food system, to understand the impact of the interactions between social institu-

TABLE 1
Trust, Distrust, and Beliefs About Food Safety

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
System Distrust (Distrust Reinforcing Properties)	Distrust a particular component	Do not rely on trust or distrust	Trust a particular component	System Trust (Trust Reinforcing Properties)	System Trust (Offsetting properties)
Perceived negative synergetic interactions among the components of the system	Incompetent (weak) watchdog	Up to the consumer to ensure the safety of the food. Don' t have to trust	Competent (strong) watchdog	Perceived positive synergetic interactions among the components of the system	The use of balancing strategies
Kyle Pam Terri	Larry Susan	George Tyson	Barbara Dorothy Simon Jenny	Amanda Willie April Jason	Nina Jason Ross

tions (perceived by consumers) on consumers' trust and distrust in the food system, and to question the relationship between individuals' trust/distrust in the system and their beliefs about food safety. Public policy implications of the findings will also be included in the discussion of the findings. In this study (analysis), as identified by the informants, key institutions of the food system include government (food related regulatory agencies), food manufacturers, farmers, scientific community, consumer groups, and media.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The research design used in this study is an adoptive and emergent one. In other words, the design unfolds as fieldwork unfolds and the emergent nature of the design affects decisions regarding sampling, data collection and analysis. Our design involved a two-stage data collection process. The first stage involved seven depth-interviews with consumers in a Midwestern state on their knowledge, beliefs and attitudes toward issues surrounding GMF. For the first study conducted in 2000, we sampled relatively educated consumers because at this time both academic and popular press noted consumers' awareness of GMF was very limited (Kilman 1999). By 2002 consumer awareness of GMF had increased from 12% in 2000 to over 70% largely due to the Starlink[®] corn fiasco and debates on stem-cell research. Therefore, our emergent theoretical perspective on factors that influence beliefs and behaviors related to GMF drove sampling decisions for the second stage. We sought to include informants with diverse orientations to GMF based around underlying differences in family stage, health concerns, social and political beliefs. The second stage involved 10 depth interviews focused on uncovering consumers' trust in the quality and safety of their food and whether and how that is related to GMF and institutions they identify as playing a role in food safety.

Data analysis was a process of gradual induction. Analysis of textual data proceeded through two distinct stages of iteration: intra-text and inter-text (Arnold and Fischer 1994; Thompson 1997). Intra-text analysis asks a set of questions to identify the codes and categories of the findings. Once codes and categories

have been identified, the researcher uses inter-textual analysis to look for patterns of relationships within different interviews (Thompson 1997). Thus, intra-text analysis addresses the extent to which general themes are shared by different respondents, and patterns of difference.

FINDINGS

Our findings are intended to illustrate the range of beliefs and behaviors associated with food safety in general and GMF in particular among U.S. Midwestern consumers. Thus, our intent is not to generalize to the American public. Table 1 provides a summary of the types of informants who rely (or not) trust and distrust for food safety. As can be seen in Table 1, many informants look at a "system" for food safety. Some of them (two columns on the right) trust the system, and some of them (first column on the left) distrust the system. However, as can be seen in Table 1, not all of the informants rely on a "system" to ensure the safety of the food. For some informants, trust in one institution (e.g. the watchdog or a high authority) can be sufficient to feel safe about the food. Similarly, for some respondents, distrust in one institution would be sufficient to feel unsafe about the food supply. In addition, some informants do not rely on trust/distrust when they think about food safety. They have other ways to ensure the safety of the food they eat. The remainder of this section will discuss various types of consumers summarized in Table 1.

Column 1: Distrust-Reinforcing Properties of the Food System (Perceived Negative Synergetic Interactions between Social Institutions)

Analysis of the data suggests that there are mainly two types of interactions that are perceived to be distrust reinforcing. Among the six social institutions that are most commonly recognized by the informants, only three institutions are mentioned to have negative (distrust-reinforcing) interactions: the government, the scientific community, and the food industry, the industry being in the center of all the negative synergies identified in the study. It is also observed that rhetoric used by the informants changes when they

speak about a negative interaction that involves the industry. The words such as “big business” and “lobbyists” are used very often to describe the industry.

A distrust building interaction between the scientific community and industry comes from the belief that scientists are increasingly being hired and funded by “big business. This, in turn, concerns Pam, a housewife, and mother of two, whose husband is a scientist/researcher in a state university. She knows through her husband how researchers in universities are increasing relying on the industry-backed “soft money” and that (as she indicates in below lengthy excerpt) concerns her as far as the safety of the food supply goes.

You know, I see...research, um...from, uh...major universities, um...research...I'd say...funded by major companies, but you'd kind of have to be careful about, well it's, uh...especially the research that is, um...performed by specific companies for their own good. I think that some of those could be skewed. Um,...so, you know, you kind of have to keep your eye on things, but, you know, I'm somewhat concerned about the, um...current trend of, um...big business and um...uh...commodity boards. Um...these groups funding research at the Universities rather than the scientists at the University getting funding from the University for pure research. Because, again, I think that uh...that limits, um...the objectivity of the researchers, um...getting money from people who are in the various industries, um...also can limit what research is done. Um...so if a scientist has a great idea for...for research that might end up harming some particular industry depending on how the research comes out. Um...what's to say he's able to get, uh...will be able to get a particular commodity board or um...company to provide funding for him to do that, uh...if there's a possibility that it could harm their, um...productivity. That just isn't happening much any more. And, uh...I think that can very much color the research that is done. And that's definitely a concern...in terms of the safety... I think that...that's a biggie. And, I think that...and I think I'm very much in a minority about this. I think most people don't really care what funding the research is coming from.

The next excerpt is from an interview with Kyle. He describes a more complex interaction that involves the government, food industry, and the scientific community and creates concerns in his perception of the safety of food. Even though there are regulations in places, he believes these food-related regulations are at times set by “listening to the industry lobbyists” instead of listening to scientists. He sees such interactions between government agencies and industry as a part of the current economic and political system that “intellectually pisses him off.”

I don't think the industry is...is...is purposely violating regulations and I...I...I don't think that the regulations aren't being followed. I think the...in...some cases the regulations just aren't strong enough. And, um...regulations aren't strict enough and part of the problem stems from the system in terms of how the regulations are...are established in the first place. You know...such as the...the use of hormones and anti-biotics. That's really a...a...a scientific and...and...policy question. But, the science is out there that...uh...that says that the hormones and the anti-biotics are a long term problem for humans. That it's a policy problem. So, in terms of who sets the...establishes the regulations...um...they are not establishing permanent regulations...in terms of how much anti-

biotics can be used or where even anti-biotics can be used. They're not listening, uh...to...to the scientists or...or reading the scientific information that says, yes, anti-biotics fed to cattle will wind up in our system and can be a problem...The industry that raises the cattle is a big industry and they...and they do have tremendous lobbying power. So, it...really it's not economics, it's politics. They have tremendous lobbying power and...they...ironically, it's the industry that's being regulated, but the industry in part establishes the regulations...When I think about how the system works...you know...it...uh...I'm upset by it. On a day in and day out basis it...it doesn't disturb me. I...on an intellectual basis it pisses me off. But, then that's the way the system works in terms of regulation of...of...how regulations are...are set up for...for...how other things...whether it be cars or...uh...pollution levels or...uh medicine. The...the regulations...regulation process is intended to protect us, but on the other hand it's compromised by...what the pressures that those particular industries apply on the regulators.

It appears that lobbying attempts of the food industry (though they are legal) have created enough disturbances among some of the informants to make them distrust the food safety system. Kyle and other respondents who are described in this section expect some components of the system (particularly government and the food industry) to act in a responsible manner. As recently noted by Nestle (2002) “Our...system must balance the rights of individuals and groups against the rights of society as a whole, and it requires elected officials to listen to groups demanding self interested actions. What concerns us... is the differential ability of food companies to obtain laws and rules that act in their favor at the expense of public health” (p. 96).

Column 2: Distrust A Particular Institution

This section deals with respondents who believe that the food supply (through conventional food system) is unsafe largely due to their perception that one major component of the system is incompetent to ensure the safety of the food. In most cases, government (regulatory agencies, politicians) is considered to be the source of their distrust in the food supply. Respondents usually make reference to the political and economic system as the source of their distrust. One important observation about these informants is that, in the presence of such distrust, the informants assume more responsibility (take more control) over their food supply and use strategies such as buying from co-ops, organic food stores, and growing their own produce and some dairy products.

Larry, an organic food consumer-informant, who is also a vegetarian, shows a great deal of suspicion when it comes to his feelings toward the conventional food system. Even though he thinks that most foods are safe to eat (to the extent that they won't kill people), he feels entering a grocery store is like entering a lottery and buying food in grocery stores can be very risky. He is particularly suspicious about meat products. Though he is a vegetarian he thinks those who buy meat in groceries are “guinea pigs” or test animals.

I think...I think it's (the food) primarily, mostly safe. In terms that it's not going to make you die or give you a horrible illness, but, um...when you walk into the grocery store one of my gut feelings is that I'm entering a lottery. Um...kind of a...gambling situation because...especially if you buy meat in a grocery store...I mean what...you always hear about these stories where a certain amount of meat gets recalled...because it was tainted with something. Or, there's an illness on certain foods

and they had to pull it off the shelves...nobody really else buys it. But, if you're the person that bought or if you're the person...the first one, or one of many that...uh...is the...the...guinea pig...or the test animal to...to start that process of saying there's a problem with this meat. It needs to get recalled. You know, so, you could be the one.

Susan shares the Larry's view in that she sees government policies and their consequences as the main source of her concern for the safety of food supply. She believes that government has let food production and processing businesses to get so big that the government can not control these businesses effectively anymore. She believes that once a powerful watchdog has become weak, it cannot oversee these big operations anymore. As a result, it does not matter for her if government (USDA) tries to assure her about the food safety. She, therefore, elects to take more responsibility in making sure about the safety of her food.

I mean just like the USDA's so-called overview of chicken production, I mean, you're probably aware now, we have to be so careful we cook our chicken thoroughly, you know. Well, if you look at how some of these chicken producers kill chickens, gut them, you know, there's all the waste, there's all the excrement. They dump the carcasses in a tank of water. No wonder we've got bacterial contamination of our chickens (laughing). And there not being cleaned, the exception is we've been buying the "Smart Chicken" which is produced here in Tecumseh, NE...The USDA has a really hard job (now). This is a big country, there's so much stuff coming in that they have to be aware of and concerned about and it's easy for me to be a critic, but um, it is the USDA's fault. They let things get bigger and bigger and out of control. I don't think it would matter any more if the USDA assured me that something was O.K...any more than if the grocery store assured me. Cause...I just don't see how they can do all the things that they're supposed to do.

Column 4: Trust A Particular Institution

This section deals with informants who believe that their food is basically safe because they believe that one component of the food safety system performs its duties sufficiently and (if necessary) would catch the mistakes made by others in the system. Barbara, for example, mentions that she would trust the decisions made by the government agencies if labeling is not offered for GMF products. She believes, if labeling is not mandatory, products must be safe and consumers would not need to know the genetic modification characteristics of these products. She further believes that even though some aspects of the food system (e.g. the food scientists) do "scary" things, she doesn't feel scared because she is confident that FDA would not allow any dangerous products to be put on the grocery shelves.

Well, I suppose it (labeling of GMF products) would be depending on how concerned you are. A lot of people would be and a lot of people would. I guess I am basically pretty trusting that they are not giving us the things that we shouldn't have. I think we have to use our best judgment and hope. I would not go to the grocery store and buy something that I know it is not safe... I think that, umm, I trust the Food and Drug Administration most of the time (laughs) and I think we have to have faith in what is happening. I know there are things happening in food and science labs, scary things. I try not to worry about whether there are negative things. I think, thanks to FDA, I don't have to (laughs).

Jenny is also a nurse but she is in her early thirties. She takes the statements made by higher authorities very seriously. In fact, she has more confidence in consuming particular food products if, for example, USDA endorses it. She has enough trust in governmental authorities that she feels she doesn't have to worry about listening (trusting) other sources for food safety.

Well, you know, maybe because I worked at the public health and I have worked in health for long time, if the government came out, or the surgeon general came out and USDA came out and say "you know people you have been eating this genetically modified food for the past X years and its fine, its healthy, its great for you," then I would probably be very comfortable with it... I think, you've got to trust something or somebody, you know people at the higher up, you don't have to trust everyone, or even think about it. You know surgeon general or a higher authority comes out and says "it is fine, there is nothing wrong, we have been doing it for the past X years," then I probably, personally would have more confidence in it.

Column 5: Trust-Reinforcing Properties of the Food System (Perceived Positive Synergetic Interactions between Social Institutions)

In this section, we will discuss the informants' view of the interactions between some of the social institutions in the food system. Some of these interactions are perceived to be trust-reinforcing in that consumers see them working together in order to provide consumers with safer, higher quality, and more efficient food supply. One of the informants, Amanda, is explaining how she feels safer about the food supply today than in the past due to the interactions between some of the social institutions, namely, science/technology, manufacturing, and the government. For example, she has trust in the "food processing business" because technology has advanced and impacted how they (businesses) are doing their job in treating food products. She also makes reference to government suggesting that due to the technological developments government is better able to ensure the safety of the food supply:

...Our technology is so advanced over the years that, you know, people tend to trust more that they're doing things better than before. You know, things are just getting better. Um...with...

I: When you say trust more to them. Who are they? Can you talk about them?

I think we're taking about businesses as well as government because I'm thinking of, you know, all the companies that are in the food processing business or in the food producing business, um...that, I probably have more trust then just because technology has advanced that, um...you know, that has to be impacted. You know, things have to be. I'm trying to think of what I've seen happen over the years since I was a kid, um...just things that you...are obvious signs that is has advanced and uh...probably for me it's seeing things like, um...what I've, again, I hate to say it, but what you'd watch on the media about, uh...how they're treating foods or how they're working on growing things more effectively or they're working sure our meats are, you know, safer...things like this. I guess I'm...I can't be in all of the places...So, I'm believing and hoping that their technology is true and they have just continued to grow in that area, and government is using these

technologies to check things, keep things under control. That's my hope.

In other cases, informants see the close relationships between big food manufacturers and the government as trust reinforcing. April perceives big manufacturers' foods as being safer due to a closer look on their operations by the government. She compares government scrutiny on a big manufacturer versus a small one, and concludes that interaction between big companies and government would make her feel better about the safety of the food offered by these big companies.

I sort of think that this is just a perception of mine that bigger the company the more watchdog the government towards that company. Like Oscar Mayer because they produce so much deli meat that FDA or whoever looks at the way they process the meat and whether their employees are wearing gloves all the time, whether what they do when something fall on the floor. I sort of think that those government regulators would be more regulating these big companies than Joe Black on the street who makes turkeys in umm slaughters them and sells to you. He doesn't have good safety and health regulations because no one enforces that for him.

Column 6: Offsetting Properties of the Food System (Consumers' Use of Balancing Strategies)

In this section, we explain the informants' use of "balancing" strategies among various social institutions in the food system to assess the safety of the food they eat. Due to page limitations this section is built around only one of the informants, Nina, who provides a very elaborate picture of strategies she uses to assess food safety. This section begins with reporting her trust in food manufacturers. She trusts the fact that big food manufacturers would provide higher quality and safer products because they have access to higher quality ingredients. Their suppliers (farmers for instance) would want to give the best of their products to these big manufacturers in order to keep their business. Further, she specifically indicates that she trusts the packaging and labeling practices of such big manufacturers due to their long time presence in the marketplace. This, according to her, in turn, generates a sense of competence that leads her to believe that these big manufacturers can be trusted.

Well, I have to say, I might have a brand bias. I mean, I do have a tendency to trust products by companies like Procter and Gamble. I feel that they are in the business long enough that if they are going to package cereal, they know how to do it, they know how to label, and therefore, they are experienced enough to accurately say what the ingredients are. This is for the accuracy of information disclosed. As far as the food quality and safety goes, I have tendency to believe that big big big businesses like PG sort of get first bites of the products, that they are more likely to get better grain, the better beans, you know, they might just have better access to umm better products that make up their final product. Whereas a smaller company or generic company might be buying cheaper products. If I am selling beans to PG, and it is every year with great quantities, I would tend to give my better product to PG. So, from the producer position, there might be bias to get better product to PG, so that's one point... And so, PG's product will be safer and higher quality.

Even though Nina indicates trust in the big manufacturers such as Procter and Gamble, she feels that (she is suspicious that) these

companies could also do anything (including potentially health damaging food practices) to stay profitable because people running these companies sometimes can be very "greedy." She believes the greedy managers might not care about the safety and welfare of the consumers as they didn't care about welfare of their employees at Enron.

I think that on the one hand P&G for example want to support their name and therefore have good quality product. But if they could cleverly inject green dye in green beans and make them look better, umm, and hide it, fool the consumer. And it may not be important for them if that green dye is not good for consumers in the long run. They have to take care their profits first, right (laughing) Look at Enron, right, they...who cares about their employees? So, right, They might not care about consumers? There are people that are very greedy and I guess greed is a...is a very big problem.

When food manufacturers cannot be counted on to bring safe products to consumers, Nina finds comfort in believing that farmers (small or big scale operators) will, to some extent, buffer the bad intentions of greedy food manufacturers. She trusts the farmers to set their priorities in favor of the consumers by "drawing the line at some point" when manufacturers try to push farmers to use potentially unsafe food practices. The source of her trust is the belief that farmers (unlike manufacturers) have a greater attachment to land, and therefore, they care more about the food (and consumers) than manufacturers.

I think, the nice thing about farmers is that, I think they want to increase yield but I think they are less likely, because they are close to the production, this is their product and I think most farmers have some, umm, there is reason why they are in that business, you know, there is some tie to the land, between them and the product they produce. Whatever that tie might be different than going to a factory and producing, you know, car parts. So, I think that for that reason farmers, even those who are in very big business, umm still are going to have a greater alignment to consumer interest than other (food) manufacturers. So, I think the farmers also will protect consumer interest and care about our safety to some extent...the manufacturer might try to push farmer beyond what they want to do, umm, but I think farmers would draw the line at some point.

However, according to Nina, in some cases, farmers are not as reliable in following food safety rules set by authorities as one might think. She doesn't believe that farmers would "degrade" the quality of the products or jeopardize the safety of the consumers intentionally; however, they may not be willing to follow the recommendations of the government because of financial pressures or convenience reasons. In fact, the farmers wouldn't voluntarily follow crucial rules (e.g. crop rotation) if there were no enforcement. In this case, the source of her distrust in farmers comes from farmers' lack of knowledge of safety issues and their unwillingness to follow the rules. In such cases (when farmers cannot be counted on ensuring the safety of the food supply) she relies on the government to "do the testing," "educate the farmers," and "enforce all the necessary rules" to protect consumers from any unsafe food. Her parents who have a small farm in the Midwest had to pay over \$10,000 in fines the year they didn't follow crop-rotation rules properly. Since then she says all farmers in the place her parents live follow the rules very carefully. From this first hand experience, she knows and trusts the government to enforce the planting rules on farmers when they are unwilling to do that.

Nina believes that government can ensure the safety of the food supply not only by controlling the farmers' practices but also setting standards for food/biological scientists who are working for the food industry. As detailed in below excerpt, she believes that scientific community (except some university-research) cannot be completely counted on to bring safe and quality products on the market because their objectives are to increase yields and the profitability of the industry for which they are working for. Through the end of the excerpt she suggests another "layer of scrutiny" that makes her feel better about the safety of the food when she is distrustful of the food-related scientific community; she feels safer in consuming food products that are exported to other countries since the these foods must also pass the safety and quality standards set by these countries.

I think scientists, too, have competing motives. So some scientists are probably trying to improve the quality of the food. Some scientists are probably trying to improve the quality of our soil. But there are other scientists who are employed by big business umm who might somehow trying to increase yield without concerns about the quality and safety, you know, humanity. And not much attention to quality and safety issues. So, and then for the industry, so if you were working for the cattleman or the dairyman, you might be trying to produce bigger cows. That might be your objective. How do we get more meat per cow? Umm, therefore, your sole objective might be really narrow. But, again I think there is government regulation that at least caps that in somewhere, you know (laughs), that there's got to be some standard out there, I assume, there is a standard out there of meat quality, beef quality and safety. Particularly on exports! Umm, because, there is something we haven't talked about it is that we focus so much about the US government, but foods that are put out there for export, I think that adds all other layer of scrutiny. And probably unfriendly scrutiny. So the Canadians are going to be very critical to some American beef because it is competing with Canadian beef. And the same is true for beef between United States and Europe. You know, the things that forces us, or umm, the structures that protects the beef industry, same structures that Europeans have in placed to protect their own beef industries, and therefore, they are going to be scrutinizing our meat.

Even though one believes that government can offset many of the food safety problems created by farmers, the scientific community, and the food industry, the informants' trust in the government is not endless. In fact Nina, in some areas, distrusts the government agencies' ability to ensure the safety of consumers. She is very suspicious about government overseeing powerful industries (such as the beef industry). It is noted earlier how she trusts government to make sure farmers are following the rules. She also owns a small store where she (among other things) breaks bulks of cheese and sells. She mentioned during our interview how government officials are checking her scale regularly to make sure she is measuring cheese right. That kind of "attention to detail" makes her trust the government in food safety. However, she also believes that government is not willing to do similar enforcements to powerful industries such as the beef industry. She believes the government is highly affected by these industries' lobbying efforts and such influences can very well jeopardize the safety of the food for consumers. For example, consumers may be fed with meat that has highly dangerous amounts of steroids in it.

I have to say, that am very suspicious of our government may be with beef industry. I think it is very powerful. Umm, the exportation of things like beef might be area in which there might less scrutiny. You know, because you want to remain competitive internationally, and so yeah, I think that there are some areas I would think that government is not that strict...I think that on the one hand, government is going to make sure that if I buy a package of cheese, that is eight ounces. They try to regulate that. On the other hand, if I buy meat, there might be dangerous amounts of steroids in it because that might enhance business and make American cows competitive with Canadian cows. Umm, yeah there might be steroids in it that make us all sick but government may not willing to see this.

When government cannot be trusted, the informants still do not feel helpless. In fact, Nina for example believes consumer action groups are potentially "the best insurance" for food safety when big business and even the government cannot be counted on, or as she puts, "get out of wag." The source of her trust in the consumer groups comes from the belief that these groups do not have competing objectives (but all the other components of the food system, farmers, scientific community, manufacturers, and government have competing objectives) The sole objective of the consumer groups is to "protect consumers" and they perform their job without expecting any funding from the industry.

I think consumer action groups probably are someways the best insurance. I remember in the past some complains about beef sold at McDonald's. It seems to me that if a high profile place like McDonald's is selling some problem meat, that you might have consumer actions response for that. Umm, some type of consumer watchdog comes in and breaks in the chain. I think, consumer action is extremely important and they are the mechanism that ensure that neither big business nor big government gets out of wag. So. I think they are very important. And not even being active, but just being latently being present probably puts pressure on chains like McDonald's, as consumer are coming and purchase goods. I think that they are big pressure. Probably more on business then on government actually. Because I am to some extent distrustful of government, umm, I think that government has competing set of goals. On the one hand consumer protection on the other hand is sale of exports. Whereas, I think consumer protection groups, their entire focus and objective and agenda is to provide consumer protection. So they are less susceptible to competing interests.

Column 3: Food Safety beyond Trust and Distrust

So far, it is argued in this paper that consumer beliefs about food safety are closely related to their trust and distrust in various food related institutions. However, not all of the informants rely on trust or distrust in institutions/system to ensure the safety of the food they consume. George, for example, accepts the fact that food cannot be completely made sure to be safe. In other words, neither government, farmers, manufacturers, nor scientists can guarantee the safety of food completely. George's view does not necessarily mean that he distrusts these institutions that are a part of the food safety system. Instead, he uses a different strategy to minimize the risks posed by potentially harmful food products: he basically tries to serve a varied diet to his family and avoids overconsuming a particular food product. This way, he doesn't "worry about consuming unsafe food."

Yeah...yeah...food in general...no, I usually don't worry about it being...uh...um...being...safe or...or...I don't...I don't worry about consuming unsafe food. Let's put it that way. I mean I...intellectually, I understand that that can happen...and, um...but...I feel that...that I eat such a varied diet and that I serve...we try to serve, you know, our family such a varied diet that they're not going to overconsume any one particular product which would...uh...if it was tainted that it would effect their health. Obviously, then you know, you can these occasional problems such as Salmonella or E. coli in meats and there, you know, we just try to be as...as careful as we can when we prepare and uh...cook the meats. But, in terms of, um...uh...any kind of packaged food or...or canned or bottled food, I...I...intellectually, I...I know that occasionally there can be problems...uh, but I...I just don't have that forefront of my mind.

Tyson is another informant for whom trusting/distrusting food system or its components is not a very important consideration for thinking about food safety. In other words, he doesn't consider trust/distrust as bases for making judgments about food safety; rather, he sees trust as given component of purchasing and consuming food. He believes he has no other choice, but to purchase food that is offered to him in the stores. He relies on his three decades food purchasing experience in making food decisions, he knows that food can be unsafe and "something could be wrong with the food", but he elects to not to think about it.

That something could be in fact wrong with the food. That something could be in the can or the package...but you do (buy) it anyway. Cause it's the only choice I have.... I don't grow my own food and I don't grow my own cows and I don't, you know... HyVee or Super Saver or I don't eat. So, basically that's the system that delivers me all my food and I don't have a lot of options to it. And so, yeah...I mean even if I am concerned about it, ultimately...being kind of pragmatic, what am I going to do if I don't want... You go with it and you know within that because that's the system that delivers my food.

DISCUSSION

In the beginning of this paper we asked: is it possible that while individual components of a system cannot be trusted, the system as a whole can? In other words, is it possible that consumers feel safe about the food they eat while they, according to many studies, distrust various institutions that are responsible for bringing them "safe" food? It appears that consumers use a number of different mental models to reason with the GMF in particular and food safety in general. The findings suggested that one explanation for this question would be the view that consumers recognize a system of food safety with various individual components (social institutions) working in a "system-like" manner to balance the weakness of each other. We framed this type of mental model of consumers as "offsetting properties of the system." In order words, the data suggest that it is true that consumers may, at times, distrust the activities of various social institutions. However, perhaps more importantly, they see interactions between their trust and distrust in various institutions, for example, trust in farmers in one issue offsets the distrust consumers have for manufacturers. These kinds of balancing strategies, in turn, appear to make the informants feel safer about their food supply. Research in systems suggests that properties of each element of the set have an effect on the properties of the set taken as a whole (Ackoff 1974; Gharajedaghi and Ackoff 1986). Similarly, as suggested in this paper, properties such as

consumer trust and distrust in each element (social institution) may affect consumer trust in the food system.

A second consumer model that may explain this question is "trust reinforcing properties of the system." In a systems view, interactions between the components of the system can create synergies that are greater than the utility of each component (Ackoff 1974). The data suggest that when consumers see positive interactions between the component institutions (e.g. between the government and science and manufacturers) they may have a greater confidence in the food supply system. These perceived interactions create positive synergies and resulting positive attitudes and beliefs toward the food system. We believe that the formation of the system trust through this second (interaction) model can also be considered as a potential problem for public policy researchers. It can be argued that in situations where the respondents trust the system, they may consciously suppress their distrust in various institutions. In such cases, although trust expressed by the informants in the system typically is rational and grounded in some experience it can be misattributed at times, and existing foundations for distrust can be discounted or ignored. In other words, it may be possible to argue that, even though consumers distrust some institutions, they may overgeneralize trust in food system. The rich sociological tradition of research on white color crime points to the role of "overgeneralized" trust as a necessary precondition for the undermonitoring of trusted employees that leads to possible deception, fraud, and embezzlement (Granovetter 1985; Shapiro 1990). This case points out the difficulties encountered where broad (generalized) trust or distrust emerges and where countervailing facets that support the contrary view is suppressed. Future research can examine the extent to which misattribution of institutional distrust and overgeneralization of the system trust can explain the difference.

Our study also suggests that a single institution may be sufficient to feel safe about the whole food supply (strong watchdog model). In all of our cases that fit into this model, government appeared to be the "sufficient" watchdog. As suggested in the literature "creating institutions that help secure trustworthiness thus helps to support or induce trust" (Hardin 1996, p.28). Sztompka (1999) notes, for example, that "it is easier to trust business partners to deliver the goods, if there is an enforceable contract signed by them at the public notary's office; it is easier trust fellow musicians in the orchestra not to botch the tune, because of a towering presence of the 'maestro' who will enforce good performance if needed..." There are numerous institutions within the food system and it may be easier to trust them if there is an institution oversees the others. Research has suggested that informants trust the government because the government "enforce rules," "have sufficient regulations," "oversees industry," "enforce recalls," etc.

We also have two consumer models in which the informants feel unsafe about the food supply because they distrust the system or one of its components. Similar to the discussion on system trust through perceived positive synergetic interactions, we believe, system distrust through the consumers' perceptions of negative synergetic interactions is an important public policy problem. Even though some informants (e.g. Pam and Terri) are identified as having distrust in the system, these informants, too, trust some aspects of the social institution in the food system. In situations where the respondents distrust the system, they may summarily dismiss the evidence of possible trustworthiness of some institutions in the system. In this case, although distrust expressed by the informants in the food system (e.g. Pam, Kyle, and Terri) has empirical foundations and is justifiable, this may lead to the summary dismissal or reinterpretation of the evidence of actual

trustworthiness of some specific institutions. From this point, benevolent or altruistic conduct by the target of distrust (specific institutions) may be viewed as further evidence of manipulativeness, an attempt at impression management, and so forth. Importantly, objective evidence of trustworthiness can be misattributed and summarily dismissed, and ultimately, the potential benefits (efficiencies and savings) associated with trust relations can be lost.

Implications for Public Policy Debates on GMF: Some of the broad public policy implications of the study has been offered in the preceding section. Now, we would like to conclude this paper with a few specific implications on GMF policy debates. The main biotechnology debates are over the novelty of modern genetic engineering, debate over pre-release testing, debate over labeling, constitutional debate, and debate over transparency (public information). In addition, there are two fundamental debates that shape the current regulatory regimes on agriculture biotechnology applications: debate over substantial equivalence doctrine and debate over the precautionary principle.¹

Perhaps the most important implication for public policy of GMF comes from the finding that, as opposed to the existing views, the relationship between consumer trust/distrust in the food system and their beliefs about the safety of GMF may not be strong. For example, those who trust the system (e.g. Amanda) can still strongly demand labeling for GMF for many other reasons such as ecological, moral, and ethical reasons. At the same time, a respondent who distrusts the system (e.g. Pam) would not have health/safety related concerns with GMF.

Our study also suggest the importance of designing public policies by distinguishing between health related and other social, economic, ecological and moral concerns consumers have about GMF. Thus, regulatory agencies should broaden their scope of what is a reasonable regulatory regime for GMF. Our findings suggest there is not a complete failure of trust among the informants as regards regulatory agencies' dealings with GMF and other food safety issues. This is in contrast to findings in other countries and consistent with previous quantitative results. However, we find consumers favor a precautionary principle rather than a substantial equivalence doctrine as a foundation for regulating GMF, primarily because of non-food safety issues associated with GMF. The substantial equivalence doctrine was adopted by the US, Canada, and Japan following the OECD-Edinburgh Conference. However, currently the US is the only country that still relies on this doctrine to regulate GMF. EU has always been skeptical, and recently both Canada and Japan have decided to reexamine and change their underlying foundation for regulating GMF.

Finally, our study suggested that informants see "industry" as the key player in their perceptions of negative synergetic interactions (distrust reinforcing properties) among the components of the system. At the same time, some informants see government as very important component of their confidence in the food safety system. As a result, we suggest that that public education programs (a component of the transparency debate) should be prepared and run by governmental outlets (e.g. NPR or PBS). A relatively successful example of this suggestion was executed about two years ago. "Frontline" and "Nova" combined their efforts to produce *Harvest of Fear* aired on PBS in the fall of 2000, incidentally during the most intense days of the Starlink[®]-corn fiasco. According to the critics, the program was "a better presentation of the controversy surround-

ing biotechnologies" and applauded even by the opponents of the biotechnologies (McCullum 2001)

In addition, more research should be funded by the federal government. As one of our respondents (Pam) suggested, she would like to see more research be done through "independent academicians" who are purely funded by the federal government. Independent academic research sponsored by the federal government is an essential component of a protective regulatory system. Unfortunately, the federal agencies that fund scientific research are not the agencies that need it for regulatory purposes. Of the three agencies with primary responsibilities for regulating GM foods, only USDA has a significant program for supporting academic research, and as Gutterman (2000) argued, the USDA is devoted primarily to developing new applications of biotechnology, not to discovering the adverse health and environmental effects of the products of the new technologies. We believe that, in order to boost consumer trust in the scientific communities, the US Congress, for example, should create a separate program through the EPA to fund research on the potential environmental effects of GM crops and animals. As suggested in this paper, it is possible that such interactions between government and scientific communities (consumer perceptions of positive synergetic interactions) can also boost trust in the system.

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¹Detailed information about the biotechnology debates and specific data about the informants' perspectives on these debates are available upon request.

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How Do Consumers Solve Value Conflicts in Food Choices? An Empirical Description and Points for Theory-building

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the value conflicts that consumers may experience while making food choices are addressed. On the basis of a literature review, there may exist several food-related value conflicts including novelty vs. tradition, health vs. indulgence, economy vs. extravagancy, convenience vs. care, technology vs. nature, and others vs. self. The key empirical issue of this study was how individuals phenomenologically experience these different food-related value conflicts. Our empirical data was qualitative and consisted of collages and interviews. Our data suggests that the most common food-related value conflicts are those between convenience and care and between health and indulgence. These two conflict experiences are described and analyzed in depth. The paper concludes by showing the relevance of attribution and balance theories in moving consumer research toward conceptualizing value conflicts in food choices.

Consumer choices are a common yet complex research phenomenon. Especially, in the case of food, consumers encounter multiple choices on the daily basis. In itself, food and eating are by their nature dynamic phenomena full of changing psychological, social, cultural and economic meanings. Connors, Bisogni, Sobal, and Devine (2001, p. 189) have illustrated this inherent dynamism and complexity in food choices and eating.

“The abundance and variety of foods from which to choose is extensive. Social changes such as the increased participation of women in the work force lead to reduced time available for food selection and meal preparation, which further complicates food choice. Contemporary consumers have fears and conflicts involving food and health, and social norms about food and meal composition that guided previous generations appear to be eroding, leaving people with a lack of structure related to food and eating behavior.”

For the majority of the consumers, food is involving in one way or another. For instance, in their study comparing food-related lifestyle segments in France, Germany, UK, and Denmark, Brunso, Grunert, and Bredahl (1996) found that Germany had the largest segment of uninvolved consumers which was still smaller than one-fourth of the consumers studied. This implies that consumers associate a variety of values with food. Values are often seen as synonymous with goals (especially general ones) which are receiving more attention from consumer researchers. For example, Bagozzi and Dholakia (1999) stress that “we know little about what consumption goals are, how they are represented in memory, how they come about and change, or how they are pursued and achieved.” According to Martins and Pliner (1998), people seek sensory enjoyment, economy, health, convenience, emotional experiences, familiarity, novelty, and ways of impressing others from their food choices. A natural consequence of this multitude of food-related values is that sometimes value conflicts arise. The conflicts happen when “values are contrasted with each other and juggled according to their significance for a particular food choice” (Furst, Connors, Bisogni, Sobal, and Winter-Falk 1996, p. 257).

It is exactly these conflicts in food choices we are interested in our paper. How usual is it that consumers experience value conflicts when choosing what to buy for food? What kinds of value conflicts are most common? Under what circumstances do the conflicts emerge? How do consumers solve these value conflicts? These are questions we try to answer in our research. On the basis of the preceding discussion we set three objectives for our paper. First, to review the existing literature concerning food choices in order to identify the nature of potential value conflicts. Second, to empirically explore the extent and nature of the value conflicts consumers face in their everyday lives. Third, to offer conceptual ways and ideas to advance theorizing about value conflicts in food choices. Not so long ago Steenkamp (1996, p. 16) stated that “consumer behavior with respect to foods has not attracted much systematic attention by consumer behavior researchers.” The situation has improved since then, mainly thanks to the Danish research program and group MAPP. In line with this development, we hope to contribute to food consumption research by giving both theoretical and empirical attention to a poorly-researched phenomenon in order to provide building blocks for food-consumption theory generally.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. In the next section we consult the psychological, sociological and cultural literatures concerning food choices to review the repertoire of potential value conflicts. In the third section we briefly describe the method and data we used. The results of a qualitative pilot study are reported next. Lastly, we introduce two theories that can be harnessed to forward the conceptualization of value conflicts in food choices.

WHAT KIND OF VALUE CONFLICTS THERE MIGHT EXIST IN FOOD CHOICES?

We decided to organize the following discussion according to juxtapositions found in Warde (1997), Ekström and Askegaard (2000), and Mäkelä (2002). These juxtapositions include novelty vs. tradition, health vs. indulgence, economy vs. extravagancy, convenience vs. care, technology vs. nature, and others vs. self.

Novelty vs. Tradition

There exist consumers who consistently want to try out new products, brands, services and experiences. This kind of food consumers can be called either novelty seekers or variety seekers, but, by the same token, there are persons who can be classified as food neophobics (Lähteenmäki and Arvola 2001). They are afraid of new elements in food. In many societies, being open to new thoughts and ideas is valued. Food manufacturers and marketers are continuously bringing new products and brands to markets. Distant ethnic cuisines are introduced and gaining ever-increasing popularity. Magazines offer food recipes that are claimed to be new in one way or another. On the other hand, tradition has become appreciated again. One of the millennium trends identified by Shore and Cooper (1999) was labeled as “origins.” Sometimes traditional food dishes conjure up nostalgia, which has received attention in consumer research lately (e.g. Summers, Johnson, and McColl-Kennedy 2001). Tradition in food choices may be preferred because it creates a sense of security, continuity, and social togetherness. Particularly

on special occasions (e.g. when having foreigners as guests or at Christmas) conventional dishes and foodways are important to many consumers.

Health vs. Indulgence

On the level of values, people in many countries state that health is one of the most important things for them. Especially in Western societies increasing preoccupation with the health effects of modern food can be seen (Caplan, 1997). Government authorities are “preaching” the importance of the food-choice-health linkage and provide norms to guide citizens in making healthy food choices. Food manufacturers and marketers try to capitalize on this trend by offering new foodstuffs and drinks that are supposed to have positive impact on health (so-called functional and/or organic foods). Ironically, the increased health-consciousness has generated anxiety in consumers too. People have started to ask questions such as What can be safely eaten? and Who should I listen to? (Ekström and Askegaard, 2000). However, even the most devoted health grazers do have their weak moments of relapse. Food is one of the most fundamental sources of hedonic experiences in human life. It is not uncommon for people to give themselves permission to indulge in delicious food every now and then (e.g. on holiday or on weekend). Mood experiences have been shown to heighten gourmandizing and excessive drinking (Luomala and Laaksonen, 1999). Perhaps the most gruesome example of these opposite forces at work is the situation in which the self-indulgent relapse is regretted and self-punishment follows in the form of food abstinence and increased physical exercise.

Economy vs. Extravagancy

In every country there is a group of consumers who are very price-conscious. Thrift has been a virtue in many countries (Warde, 1997). Economical emphasis manifests itself in many ways in food choices. Many consumers seek low prices especially on weekdays. Large quantities of dishes that are easy to prepare may be cooked for economy and convenience. Many consumers are reluctant to throw away food that is left. The leftovers are preserved in the fridge for later use. The “conservative” lifestyle segment found in Brunso et al.’s (1996) study is likely to behave like this. As an echo of the wartime, children are still often asked to “empty their plates.” Although the monetary resources of households have a direct bearing on how much and what food is consumed (Ritson and Petrovici, 2001), even households with moderate or low income are on certain festive occasions extravagant. Extravagancy may mean that there is plenty of something, or that food is basically the same as usual but is done using higher quality ingredients, or that food (or food items) is a rarity. For example, food and wine connoisseurs often want to impress others by offering exceptional wines and exotic dishes (cf. Martins and Pliner, 1998). On these occasions extravagancy becomes a statement of social status, and appreciation of the generous sophistication might be expected.

Convenience vs. Care

It is a general belief that life has become more and more hectic. For some consumers (e.g. career women with children) time is a more valuable resource than money. This has created a natural demand for convenience foods (fully or partially prepared foods, take-away meals, eating in restaurants). According to Candel (2001), a person who seeks convenience in meal preparation is not involved with food products, is not a variety seeker, does not enjoy cooking, and has a heavy burden of obligatory activities. Food provision (planning, shopping, preparing) is still very much of women’s responsibility (Ekström, 1991). Caring diligently that the

husband and the children get enough good and healthy food is a part of the stereotypical picture of a “proper housewife”. Care materializes when a woman puts a lot of effort and time into preparation and esthetic serving of food to please her spouse and/or children. Contentment may be felt after role-congruent behavior, but not being able to meet the norms, for example by resorting to convenience foods, may also create feelings of shame and guilt.

Technology vs. Nature

One of the millennium trends uncovered by Shore and Cooper (1999) was transformism. They state (1999, p. 43) that: “Advances in science and genetics have created the biological foundation for the belief in ‘new self’. ... Scientifically-based pharmaceutical, health and beauty products, nutraceuticals, new fabrics and leading edge products are among the categories likely to respond to this trend.” While many American consumers believe that genetic modification of food will result in more healthy and higher quality food, the public reaction in Europe has been much more negative and reserved (Nelson, 2001). For instance, Danish and Swedish consumers in Ekström and Askegaard’s (2000) study used words such as artificial, synthetic, and unnatural to describe genetically modified food. It seems that for some consumers the naturalness of food has become an important choice criterion (the case of organic food products) (Kantanen, 2002). In Scandinavia especially, “technological” food are associated with danger and “natural” food with safety.

Others vs. Self

Here, by “others” we mean both widely-impacting and long-term consequences of food choices for the mankind (e.g. ethicality) and social aspects of eating. Food choices can be seen as moral and ethical utterances which make food also a societal and political issue. People have in addition to their personal welfare started to think about the welfare of other people, animals, and the globe (Mäkelä, 2002). According to Shore and Cooper (1999, p. 42), “attention will turn to family unity, bonds of love and sharing, and the importance of maintaining family ties” (the so-called “unification” trend of the millennium). Planning, preparing, and enjoying food have always had a role in maintaining and developing social relationships. On the other hand, there is a discussion concerning the individualization of societies. For example, Valentine and Gordon (2000, p. 196) assert that “the 21st century ‘consumer’ is a ‘subject’ that continually constructs identities for itself by entering into the process of consumption.” An illustration of expressing one’s individuality by very specific food choices is vegetarians and food connoisseurs (cf. Ekström and Askegaard, 2000).

The value conflicts listed here and summarized in Table 1 arise mainly from sociological research which emphasizes society as a level of analysis. Is it so that consumers also experience these value conflicts at the individual level and if they do, how do they experience them? This is what we wish to find out in the empirical part.

METHOD AND DATA

As the aim was to identify consumers’ potential value conflicts in food choices, two different kinds of qualitative research methods were used to gather the data. First, seven focus group interviews (in the summer of 2001) and after that ten personal interviews (in the spring of 2002) were performed. To supplement interviewing, the collage technique was also used. Visual methods are useful when there is a need to reveal deep and latent thoughts, attitudes and feelings related to a research topic (see e.g. Lieber, 1997; Sack, 1998; Zaltman, 1996). The data was originally gathered for analyz-

TABLE 1
Summary of food-related value conflicts

Value conflict	Key meaning
novelty vs. tradition	The tension between an individual's perceived pressures of favoring the new and unknown (e.g. distant ethnic cuisenes) and the known and "correct" in foods and eating (e.g. a Christmas turkey).
health vs. indulgence	The tension between an individual's perceived pressures of favoring the healthy (e.g. low fat yogurt) and the pleasurable in foods and eating (e.g. a butter-baked cream cake).
economy vs. extravagancy	The tension between an individual's perceived pressures of favoring the economy (e.g. use of leftovers) and the luxurious in foods and eating (e.g. caviar with champagne).
convenience vs. care	The tension between an individual's perceived pressures of favoring the ease and save of time (e.g. take-away-food) and the effort and use of time in foods and eating (e.g. preparing a gourmet dinner for the family).
technology vs. nature	The tension between an individual's perceived pressures of favoring the advancement (e.g. vitaminized orange juice) and the naturalness in foods and eating (e.g. organic pork meat).
others vs. self	The tension between an individual's perceived pressures of favoring the other-centeredness (e.g. a family meal on Sundays or buying bananas whose farmers are properly compensated for) and the self-centeredness in foods and eating (e.g. a wine and cheese connoisseur giving him/herself a treat).

ing the relationship between the consumer and food. The value conflicts in food choices, per se, were not the primary focus when the data was gathered. So, here the data is more or less of secondary in nature.

Altogether, 48 interviewees participated in the interviews (38 in focus groups and 10 in personal interviews). They were chosen purposively so that they formed as rich and versatile a sample as possible. There were 29 women and 19 men and their ages varied between 17 and 67. In focus groups the participants were asked to create freely a collage with pictures and words given (170 pictures to each) from a topic "Food and me". After that each participant described his/her collage to the rest of the group. In personal interviews participants were asked to create "Food and me" - collage in their homes within one week. Pictures were allowed to be chosen freely from newspapers and magazines, except pictures describing food. This restriction was given in order to encourage the participants to use pictures as *metaphors* describing their relation to food. The participants were then interviewed personally mainly on the basis of Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique, which is developed for helping revealing consumers' internal state of mind (Zaltman, 1996, p. 13). All the focus groups and personal interviews were recorded and transcribed carefully afterwards.

To reiterate, the data consisted of both verbal and visual material. In order to reveal consumers' food-related value conflicts, the transcribed interview tapes were read through several times analyzing the collages at the same time. All the food-related value conflicts that emerged were marked and summed up in order to form a general picture of the magnitude of different conflicts. Special attention was paid to examining how participants felt the conflict, how it was explained and solved and in what context it emerged. Reliability of the analysis was safeguarded by having three coders independently identifying the conflicts in the transcripts and collages.

FINDINGS

Table 2 reports the frequencies of the value conflicts in food consumption as identified by the three different coders of the data.

As can be seen from the table, all of the food-related value conflicts could be identified in the data, although there are differences in the magnitudes of the value conflicts. Next, we will phenomenologically explore the two most common value conflicts in food choices, which include the convenience-care conflict and the health-indulgence conflict. The potential reasons for some of the differences in coder frequencies are tackled at the end of this section.

Convenience vs. Care

On the basis of our data it seems that many informants felt the need to defend their use of convenience foods and highlighted the occasions on which they put a lot of effort and time into preparing and serving food. Convenience meant using semiprocessed food-stuffs, preparing "easy foods", and serving snacks. Reasons that justified the use of convenience foods included lack of time on weekdays (mainly work), household obligations, hobbies, and eating alone. On the other hand, care was often associated with gourmet food and food that is prepared all way through and with esthetics in serving and laying the table. Weekends and festive occasions seemed to evoke care (e.g. window-dressing when having guests over) in food preparation and eating. Also family gatherings and social interaction often induced care. The narratives below illustrate some of the points made here.

"And then the food what we have on weekdays. We don't put that much effort into laying the table, we throw the plates on the table. We are busy, we don't have the time for it. And tired too, especially now when we have the baby. We have clearly reduced this, and when preparing food for myself I try to quickly do something when I'm alone with the baby, gourmet food is out of the question then." (female, 26, social worker)

"I do homely food and offer vegetables, but not every day. I cook the dishes my children want me to cook, but I also sometimes buy convenience foods for them. You cannot be perfect every day." (female, 36, secretary)

TABLE 2
Frequencies of different value conflicts in food consumption by coders

Value conflict	Coder 1	Coder 2	Coder 3	Mean
novelty vs. tradition	18	9	17	14
health vs. indulgence	25	15	29	23
economy vs. extravagancy	8	10	11	9.7
convenience vs. care	34	23	23	26.7
technology vs. nature	3	4	3	3.3
others vs. self	13	11	17	13.7

“These wine bottles are here because they tell that in our family wine is a part of a good meal. These beautifully laid tables imply that when we invite guests over we have a habit of making food to its perfection and put a lot of effort into serving and table decoration. Then we eat peacefully and without any sense of hurriedness.” (female, 31, forewoman)

Health vs. Indulgence

It was usual for informants to recognize the importance of healthy eating. It seems that food and health education has been internalized to a great degree, because many informants used words such as “regularity”, “balance”, and “manysidedness”. Also food that was wholly made at home (possibility of controlling what is put into food) and the domestic origin of foodstuffs were often taken as signs of healthiness. For some informants, digressing from the healthy diet caused feelings of guilt and anxiety (one informant even punished herself after “not playing by the rules”). Even the most health-oriented informants agreed that hedonism and self-indulgence are an essential part of their “foodworlds”. Indulgence is ok, if there is some permission for it and it is temporary (many informants were aware of the unhealthiness that goes with food treats). Weather, accomplishments, weekends, festive occasions, mood states can act as permission givers for indulgence. Food hedonism may be focused (e.g. gulping down huge amounts of Mövenpick ice-cream) or comprehensive (e.g. gourmet food made of the very best ingredients, extravagance in laying the table and decorating the dining space). The following three narratives shed some light on the issues discussed above.

“Nowadays, it is so that chocolate is a delicacy I often cannot resist. And then we eat a lot of Italian food, even though I have many domestic foods in my collage. This picture of a slim, skinny and healthy woman, it’s the ideal, but I feel that I am this little chubby elephant, who, nevertheless, is happy, even though its measures are not what they are supposed to be.” (female, 27, architect)

“I have used contradictory words in my collage: impulsive, prudent and rational on the other hand, emotional and careless on the other. It is just so, my mood states greatly influence my eating and even my shopping behavior. Sometimes I think that I should skip eating buns and cakes... There are no days that are exactly the same. It depends how I feel.” (female, 23, student)

“On weekdays we try to have healthy food, but at weekends we give ourselves a permission to relapse. Eating goodies while reading or watching movies are examples of relapses. And

grilling sausages in the fireplace... I don’t know, but we will always come up with an excuse for eating better and more expensive stuff.” (female, 26, construction engineer)

An important observation was that the experiences of food-related value conflicts were not always in terms of the antinomies that emerged from the literature review. For example, the other pole for convenience was in some cases indulgence (“convenience foods taste bad”), economy (“convenience foods are not inexpensive”), or health (“convenience foods are unhealthy”) and not care. Similarly, the other pole for health was sometimes convenience (“healthy foods require effort in purchasing and preparation”), economy (“healthy foods are expensive”), or technology (“healthy foods are genetically modified”) instead of indulgence. It is likely that this is a valid explanation for the differences in frequencies that can be seen in Table 2. One coder may have classified a convenience-indulgence value conflict as belonging to the convenience-care category while the second coder may have classified this conflict as belonging to the health-indulgence category. This issue needs attention in future research.

DISCUSSION: TOWARDS CONCEPTUALIZING VALUE CONFLICTS IN FOOD CHOICES

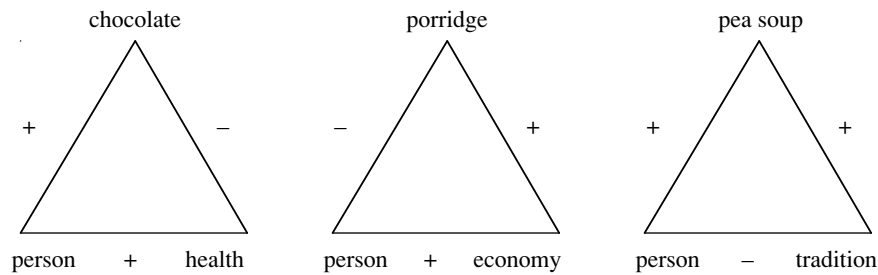
In this section we describe how two different theories could be harnessed to advance conceptualization of value conflicts in food choices. These two theories are the attribution theory and the balance theory.

Attribution Theory

The origins of attribution theory can be seen in Kelley’s (1967) work (Weiner 2000, p. 382). However, the most prominent developer of the attribution theory as it now stands is Bernard Weiner. Here we briefly introduce the theory, apply it in the context of food-related value conflicts, and make a couple of claims that should be addressed in future research.

The guiding principle of attribution theory is that individuals search for understanding, seeking to discover why an event (especially if it is negative or controversial) has occurred. Inasmuch as the potential list of causes is considerable within any motivational domain, and because the specific causes differ between domains, it is essential to create a classification scheme or a taxonomy of causes. (Weiner 1982, pp. 185-186) Weiner (1982) identifies three causal dimensions: locus of control, stability, and controllability. Later he (2000) emphasizes the relevance of the last two in the consumer behavior context. According to this thinking, the basic ways of explaining different outcomes are: stable-controllable attribution, stable-uncontrollable attribution, unstable-controllable attribution, and unstable-uncontrollable attribution.

FIGURE 1
Unbalanced states in the person-food product-food value triad.



What do then these basic attributions mean in the context of food-related value conflicts? We illustrate these basic attributions by using examples from our data. A value conflict (health vs. indulgence) may arise when a person who has a hedonistic orientation toward food, buys or eats something that is healthy (and by his/her standards often tastes bad). A case of the stable-controllable attribution can be seen when this person believes that hedonism is not just self-indulgence, it is abstinence too: without abstinence or “suffering” there cannot be real eating pleasure. This is one way to resolve the value conflict.

According to our empirical data the convenience-care value conflict may be generated when an individual sees himself/herself as caring about the quality and appearance of food, but buys semiprocessed foodstuffs and uses them in preparing meals (which can be regarded as unhealthy or even dangerous). An example of stable-uncontrollable attribution is when this kind of care-oriented person explains his/her “deviant” behavior as reflecting the current work situation: “my life is so busy nowadays that I cannot follow my principles all the time.” This was one explanation for the convenience-care value conflict that emerged from the data.

It seems that unstable attributions are more common. For instance, when a person, who normally favors organic foods and ingredients, buys and eats technologically engineered food, technology-nature value conflict may be witnessed. An example of an unstable-controllable explanation for this value conflict is a situation in which an organic food favorer has invited guests who are known to like or for medical reasons need technologically engineered food. To illustrate, the guests may be older people with increased risk of heart disease. The hostess, who normally buys “natural” food, may think that “my husband’s parents have high cholesterol levels so this time I buy a box of cholesterol-reducing margarine for everyone to use”. The premeditation of this decision makes it a controllable explanation.

Finally, the unstable-uncontrollable attribution can be illustrated by looking at the economy-extravagancy value conflict. A price-conscious consumer may temporarily give up his/her economic principle due to, say, a negative mood state. For example, a person may after a stressing work week (that was caused by uncontrollable factors) want to give himself/herself a treat by buying filet and red wine instead of the usual minced meat and milk. In other words, the existence of the negative mood gives the permission for the person to behave extravagantly, against the norm that may be long-established and personal. Stories like this were not difficult to find in the data.

We hope that these examples have shown that attribution theory is a viable candidate when the food-related value conflicts need conceptual foundations. Our observations give rise to at least two intriguing questions. First, do certain attributions (e.g. un-

stable-uncontrollable) outnumber the rest? Second, to what extent does the “content” of the attributions vary across different food-related value conflicts? The next step is to increase the formalization of the attribution theory account of food-related value conflicts and of the empirical and analytical approaches to treating food choice-related attributions (cf. e.g. Stratton and Bromley 1999).

Balance Theory

Balance theory considers relations among elements a person perceives as belonging together. These relations may be for dyads, triads, or more complex cases, but all relations are seen from the perceiver’s subjective viewpoint. Two types of relations between separate entities are identified: unit and sentiment relations. A unit relation exists when one entity is seen as belonging to or being a part of the other entity. A sentiment relation exists when two entities are linked because one has expressed a preference or dislike for the other. The theory specifies that people desire relations among entities to be harmonious, or balanced. If they are not, a state of tension will result until perceptions are changed and balance is restored. (Solomon, Bamossy, and Askegaard 1999; Woodside and Chebat 2001).

In the present research context, the entities involved in the relations could logically be person-food product-food value. The existence of food-related value conflict implies the existence of imbalance. On the basis of Woodside and Chebat (2001), there exist three different kinds of unbalanced states in the case of triads. Figure 1 depicts these three potential unbalanced states in the person-food product-food value triad. The first triad illustrates the health-indulgence value conflict, the second triad the economy-extravagancy value conflict, and the third the novelty-tradition value conflict.

The unbalanced state in the first triad is a case where a person values health, but also likes chocolate which is unhealthy. According to the balance theory, there are three principal ways to achieve a harmonious state of being. First, the person somehow manages to turn his/her liking for chocolate into dislike. Second, the person reevaluates his/her values and reaches a conclusion that health is not important to him/her. Third, the person stops considering chocolate as unhealthy.

The second triad presents the unbalanced state in which the person values economy, but does not like porridge, which is an inexpensive food. The principal ways of resolving this food-related value conflict are the following. First, the person develops a taste for porridge. Second, the person relaxes his/her demands on the value of economy. Third, the person changes his/her view concerning porridge as an economic choice.

The last triad tackles the unbalanced state in which the person does not think highly of traditions, but likes pea soup which is a very

traditional dish in certain countries. Once again, there are three ways to dispel the tension. First, the person stops liking pea soup. Second, the person, for some reason or other, starts to appreciate traditions (e.g. as growing old). Third, the person does not any longer associate pea soup with tradition.

The discussion above raises many interesting questions. In re-establishing the balanced state, which ways are the most logical and feasible and thus dominate. Describing how the process of regaining the balanced state goes about in the case of different food-related value conflicts is another intriguing issue. Beyond triads, more complicated constellations of entities and unit and sentiment relations involved in food choices and consumption should be analyzed (e.g. family food choice and consumption processes). Another promising future research theme is to examine how the changes in perception of different relations can occur. For instance, is it possible to develop a chocolate that is perceived as healthy or a porridge that is perceived as a delicious treat? Should this be done by really changing the product or just by creating a new image for the product? Generally, going analytically through different food-related value conflicts in the case of different food products from the viewpoint of balance theory may produce novel ideas for food product development and marketing.

We conclude with a few words concerning the relationship between the attribution theory and the balance theory. As we see it, the attribution theory can be used to analyze the causal origins of consumers' food-related value conflict experiences, while the balance theory is useful in understanding how consumers resolve the value conflicts they perceive to exist in food choices. In other words, these theories supplement each other; they can be used to investigate different aspects of the same phenomenon. Furthermore, it would be intriguing to combine these theoretical accounts to scrutinize whether different attributions (e.g. external vs. internal) lead to a selection of certain type of balance regain strategy. The integration of the attribution and balance theories offers a fruitful point of departure for developing many new and interesting research questions for future studies.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Consumer Decision Strategies Under Conflict

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SESSION OVERVIEW

The three papers in this session address decision strategies that people use when they are confronted with different types of conflict. When consumers are faced with purchase decisions, some type of conflict is inherent. Options that present the most positive attributes also may naturally contain negative elements. For instance, the designer sweater may also pose a challenge to the budget; the beautiful table you'd like may have been made with wood from an endangered rainforest, etc. How do consumers cope with these sorts of conflicts? These three papers suggest that consumers utilize cognitive coping skills to protect themselves from the affect inherent in the conflict. The papers address a coping strategy at each of the three levels of the decision process. Meloy and Russo's paper shows that, when available, decision framing can make a big difference. By reframing the decision task to be compatible with the valence of the options, consumers experience less conflict and have more confidence in their decision. Ehrich and Irwin's paper shows that, when faced with a decision they cannot reframe, consumers will implicitly and explicitly avoid information that has the potential to cause conflict. Finally, Mukhopadhyay and Johar's paper shows that, if the attribute information cannot be avoided, consumers will engage in complex justification strategies aimed at reducing the conflict.

In the first paper, Meloy and Russo showed the importance of decision framing in choices between negative and positive options. When people are asked to choose among negative options ("burdens") or to reject positive options ("benefits"), they experience negative consequences, such as conflict, confusion, and lowered confidence. On the other hand, when they are asked to reject negative options or choose among positive options, they cope much better, affectively and cognitively. Note, of course, that the framing of the task does not change the informational content of the decision. Thus, this work suggests that decision conflict may be avoided by reframing the question to be compatible with the valence of the options.

Reframing of the situation is not always possible because the options themselves may contain both positive and negative elements. In the second paper, Ehrich and Irwin showed that, in this situation, consumers avoid having to use information that causes conflict. It was found that consumers willingly used the conflict causing information when it was presented to them prior to a choice task, but would specifically avoid requesting the information if they were told it was available. Ironically, they discovered that these findings are especially true for respondents who value the attribute that is causing the conflict (that is, respondents who are experiencing increased conflict). For example, people who were very concerned about the protection of endangered rainforests would avoid information about the source of the wood used to make a desk while consumers who felt that child labor was something to be highly concerned about avoided information about the labor conditions in the plants that manufactured cell phones on which they were deciding. Consumers were found to avoid the information explicitly (by not asking for the attribute information) and implicitly (by forgetting or misremembering) the attribute information.

The third paper, by Mukhopadhyay and Johar, consumers are faced with decisions with full attribute information that cannot be reframed. How do they cope with decision conflict in this situation? In several studies, the authors show that decision justification plays

a large role. When consumers can justify their decisions, they experience less conflict and emotion. Note that these justifications are coping mechanisms, not (necessarily) earmarks for actual utility maximization strategies. For instance, the justifications become especially necessary when the conflict has been primed by a previous related conflict that did not lead to purchase.

Discussion leader, Baba Shiv, did a great job of tying the three papers together while noting the importance of studying how conflict impacts the strategies that consumers use in their decision making. He also answered audience questions and discussed future research directions for this area of consumer research.

"Conflict and Framing: Selecting versus Rejecting in Binary Choice"

Margaret G. Meloy, The Pennsylvania State University

J. Edward Russo, Cornell University

We examine information processing differences under instructions to select versus reject in binary choice. Although the experimental evidence provides support for previously hypothesized causes for select-reject differences, many of the predicted relationships were reversed when the decision alternatives were undesirable rather than attractive. Selecting one of two negative options or rejecting one of two positives resulted in a more disrupted process and greater conflict. In these incompatible cases, individuals were less certain of their choice, less extreme in their attribute evaluations, and less likely to distort attribute information. Verbal protocols revealed that task re-framing was common to reduce decision conflict and increase compatibility.

"Willful Ignorance in the Face of Conflict: The Avoidance of Ethical Attribute Information"

Kristine R. Ehrich, The University of Texas at Austin

Julie R. Irwin, The University of Texas at Austin

We find that, when presented with the possibility of finding attribute information that conflicts with personal goals, in this case behaving ethically, consumers are likely to avoid this information; however, if presented with a full-information analysis, they will use it in their decision making. This avoidance of information is especially strong for those consumers who value this information and are therefore at an increased level of conflict. In two follow-up studies, we find that consumers who were asked to recall attribute information are likely to either forget the conflict-causing attribute value or to misremember the attribute as being more favorable than it actually was.

"When Desire Conflicts with Willpower: The Role of Justification in a Theory of Unintended Purchase"

Anirban Mukhopadhyay, Columbia University

Gita V. Johar, Columbia University

Consumers spend substantial proportions of their expenditures on products they had not intended to buy. Correspondingly, marketers spend billions of dollars trying to influence purchase incidence. What determines whether consumers give in to such temptations, or hold back from them? Research in this area typically looks either at compulsive consumption, i.e., behaviors of people who chronically succumb to purchase temptations (e.g. O'Guinn and Faber 1989), or at impulsive behavior not necessarily in purchase contexts (e.g. Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999). This paper

addresses the question of how consumers respond to unintended purchase opportunities, and how a decision to either buy or not buy can affect responses to subsequent tempting offers. Distinct from the majority of research on self-control, it builds on the insight that purchase consists of the two related but independent activities of spending and acquisition, and proposes a conceptual model specific to situations of unintended purchase. This model suggests that exposure to an unintended purchase opportunity may simultaneously cue the two goals of acquisition and not spending. These goals may be in conflict under some conditions, and this conflict may be resolved through a search for reasons, and the relative justifiability of the two options available to the consumer, buy or not buy.

We present three studies based on scenarios where participants see tempting products on sale while waiting at a mall. A goal of not spending money unnecessarily was always salient. The products used were extensively pre-tested to be equally attractive, and were from two categories, books and software. Each purchase occasion was disguised as a choice between two similar offers within the same category and a no-choice option. The dependent variable whether either of the two offers was chosen as opposed to not buying anything. Building on Wertenbroch (1998), virtue products were defined as *any* products that deliver long-term value, but are relatively less valuable in the short term, such as science books and instructional software. Vice products, on the other hand, were defined as those that offer greater value in the short term than they do in the long term (e.g. thriller books and computer games), and stimuli were pre-tested to suit these definitions.

Experiment 1 studied responses to single unintended purchase opportunities, and found that under a low need to justify the purchase decision, proportions of subjects deciding to buy was the same across virtues and vices (approximately 50% as per the baseline propensity to buy established in a pilot study). However, under a high need to justify, the proportion choosing to buy vices dropped, while choice proportions for virtues remained unchanged. This demonstrates that under a high need to justify the purchase decision, vices are more difficult to justify buying than virtues. Analysis of thought protocols supported this contention.

Experiments 2 and 3 extended the investigation to an intertemporal domain. Theoretically, encountering a second unintended purchase opportunity while the first decision is still accessible in memory should have two effects. First, since both goals—acquisition and not spending—have recently been invoked, conflict should be greater at Time T2, and this should lead to a relatively high need to justify. This would imply that virtues would be easier to justify buying at T2. Moreover, if a second purchase opportunity is encountered while the reasons for the first decision are accessible, then behavior is likely to be consistent with these reasons. Hence the justifiability of buying at T2 should be driven by the nature of the decision at T1 as well as the nature of the product at T2, and the higher this justifiability (highest for T1 Buy T2 Virtue, lowest for T1 No buy T2 Vice, and intermediate otherwise), the higher the purchase likelihood. However, this need not always be the case. Specifically, those respondents who had not bought at T1, and have the reasons for their restraint made more accessible, may self-reward with a vice.

Experiment 2 was a 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects design, where subjects were made to go through the decision process twice (at different purchase opportunities within the same scenario). After being exposed to an offer at T1 (product category: books, vices only), they were told whether they bought or not, and were asked to generate reasons to support this decision. Then, after a filler task, they were asked to recall these reasons (or not—this was the accessibility manipulation). Then at T2 they saw another offer

(product category: software), which was either a virtue or a vice. We found that under a baseline accessibility of reasons for the T1 decision (no recall condition), purchase likelihood decreased monotonically with justifiability. This was also the case in the heightened accessibility condition, except for the critical case of respondents who had not bought at T1 and were presented with a vice. In this case, normally the lowest justifiability of buying at T2, purchase likelihood was the highest.

The aim of Experiment 3 was to allow the decision at T1 to occur naturalistically, instead of being forced, and also to allow the product at T1 to be either a virtue or a vice, to investigate switching or balancing hypotheses. Similar to Experiment 2, after being exposed to an offer at Time T1 (category: books, virtue or vice), respondents chose to buy or not. We treated this response at T1 as a measured variable. Then at Time T2 they saw another offer (category: software), which could again be virtue or vice. As before, purchase likelihood decreased with justifiability of buying at T2. However, the nature of the product at T1 had no effect on the decision at T2, thereby refuting balancing explanations in favor of the proposed justification model.

In sum, this research contributes to the literature on consumer self-control, by demonstrating how conflict between desire and willpower plays out in purchase situations where consumers had not originally intended to buy. The study of purchase incidence over time is an important problem, and, across experiments, the justification model explains the observed patterns better than competing theories.

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Outraged Consumers: What Lights Their Fire?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

It seems like outraged consumers are everywhere. They become furious when their flights are cancelled, their telephone bills contain unexpected charges, or the line they must wait in for service is excessively long (Brady, 2000; Appelman, 2001). Considerable research has examined consumer responses to low to moderate levels of dissatisfaction. Researchers have also reported the existence of outraged and highly frustrated consumers who want to get back at firms (Blodgett et al., 1997; Oliver, 1989; Richins, 1983). However, little research has examined in depth the segment of consumers so highly frustrated that they seek to exact revenge on firms or brands. Initial research in this area has documented extreme, and possibly harmful, consumer feelings and behaviors resulting from a consumer desire for vengeance (see, e.g., Nasr and Morrin, in press). In the present paper, we try to better understand the affective experiences of outraged consumers. We particularly focus on what pushes these consumers over the edge, i.e., the main drivers of their outrage.

Two studies designed to better understand the psychological mechanisms underlying the vengeful behavior of outraged consumers are reported in this paper. Study 1 is exploratory in nature and consists of a content analysis of messages posted on the web by highly frustrated consumers who express a need to "get back" at firms. After detailed analysis of the themes emerging from the web content analysis, we designed a laboratory experiment to investigate, in a more controlled setting, one of the major factors that appeared to be involved in consumers' desire for vengeance against firms, namely, perceptions of justice.

A non-structured content analysis of 29 web messages located through the Google search engine, revealed four major themes, namely (1) trust violation, (2) rude treatment, (3) feelings of disappointment and helplessness, and (4) the urge to disseminate negative experiences. Consumers became outraged when they felt that firms violated their trust by breaking promises that firms had made initially (e.g., in its advertisements), or in the redress stage, i.e., in the process of handling their complaints. Rude employees were frequently reported in the messages. Such rude treatment by customer service personnel was received with surprise on the part of the consumers who expected to be treated with courtesy. Consumers, particularly those in the redress stage, expect not only courtesy, but feel that an apology is due. Faced with a firm that did not meet their expectations, customers felt disappointed and in a state of disbelief. Their bad experiences were perceived as painful to them. A general feeling of helplessness, i.e., inability to make any useful steps further, was reported. In terms of behavioral response, consumers felt an urge to disseminate their negative experience and considered it something they had to do. Others went further in an attempt to warn consumers about bad firm practices.

The four themes emerging from the content analysis are in line with previous research in the fields of vengeance and consumer dissatisfaction. Researchers have identified trust violation as a main antecedent to vengeance (see, e.g., Bies & Tripp, 1996). This theme is also in line with literature on satisfaction/dissatisfaction where, according to the expectations paradigm, breaking a promise is one form of negative disconfirmation, a main reason for dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1989). Although product/service failures were not necessarily due to employees' incompetence or mistakes, mistreatment by employees seemed to inflame the problem. The importance of personal interactions has been noted in previous research address-

ing the redress stage (Blodgett et al., 1993). In studying complaint behavior, Richins (1983) pointed to the absence of a firm's apology as an incentive to spread negative word-of-mouth.

Feelings of helplessness are an interesting finding as they appear to be qualitatively different than negative emotions experienced by dissatisfied consumers and previously reported by researchers (see, e.g., Westbrook and Oliver, 1991). Researchers in the area of vengeance have reported that feelings of helplessness and the absence of an alternate system to restore order was a main antecedent of vengeful actions (Gould, 2000). This feeling of helplessness has been used to explain the widespread behavior of vengeful activities in societies lacking active judicial systems (Waldmann, 2001). A similar line of reasoning could explain why so many instances of consumer revenge seem to be directed towards large, market-dominant, and highly powerful firms, such as Nike or Microsoft. It is unclear whether participants disseminated information for the good of other consumers, i.e. to help them, or for the bad of the perpetrator firm, i.e., to hurt the firm, or both. Previous studies on negative word-of-mouth behavior have pointed to consumers' eagerness to share their negative experiences, at times even with complete strangers (Richins, 1983; TARP, 1986).

Study 2 focuses on the redress stage and was designed to address the following questions: (1) is it possible to avoid consumers' retaliatory behavior by allowing for a better experience at the redress stage, and (2) what makes a redress stage successful in offsetting the vengeful effects of the initial problem? To address these questions, we draw on perceived justice theory. Two aspects of perceived justice, interactive and distributive, were examined as possible psychological triggers to vengeance. Distributive justice is concerned with the perceived fairness of the tangible outcome, e.g., credit for excess billing charges. Interactional justice is the perceived fairness of the manner in which individuals were treated throughout the conflict resolution process, e.g., courtesy of employees handling the complaint.

Results of a 2 X 2 between-subjects laboratory experiment showed that the tangible outcome of a complaint, i.e., perception of distributive justice, is a significant determinant of the feeling of desire for vengeance. However, it takes a perception of bad personal treatment, i.e., low interactive injustice, for consumers to behave sub-optimally or with revenge. In effect, the strong feelings of vengeance led to reactive switching behavior in cases of negative tangible outcomes. However, those feelings were not converted into a proactive response unless the consumer was also treated rudely. In fact, acting vengefully, i.e., proactively, came as a result of bad personal treatment regardless of the tangible outcome of the dispute.

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Eating Guilt: Measurement and Relevance to Consumer Behavior

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Few areas of consumer behavior rival the importance of eating. Americans spend over \$750 billion each year for food, nearly 15 percent of total expenditures (U.S. Department of Commerce 2001). Moreover, eating in most cultures is strongly associated with morality in that most religions have normative beliefs about what to eat, when to eat, and how much to eat. The historical connection between morality and eating has received renewed attention recently (Rozin 1999), perhaps because of growing health problems associated with over-eating. Over the past few decades, obesity has increased dramatically in developed countries such as the U.S. contributing to a variety of negative health conditions (Must et al. 1999). Some have referred to this trend as an obesity epidemic, and have warned that strategies for weight control need to receive a greater public health priority (Mokdad et al. 1999).

This paper measures eating guilt and tests a model of its antecedents and consequences using structural equations. The model test serves both to assess the validity of the scale and to provide substantive insights regarding the role of guilt in consumer behavior. Despite extensive research into the role of guilt in eating disorders, guilt about food has not been widely studied relative to food consumption in a healthy population.

The Concept of Guilt

Huhmann and Brotherton (1997) define consumer guilt "as an emotional state involving penitence, remorse, self-blame, and self-punishment experienced after committing a violation or contemplating a future violation of internalized standards of proper behavior." Thus, guilt can occur because one did something which violated one's standards (guilt by commission) or because one failed to do something consistent with one's standards (guilt by omission). In addition, central to the concept of guilt is the idea of alleviating guilt via making reparations for one's transgressions. Guilt inducing messages can be effectively used to motivate consumers to make reparations for their transgressions by consuming certain products.

Measuring Eating Guilt

Statements designed as guilt indicators were generated from the literature by the authors. A pool of 40 such items was reviewed by a panel of marketing doctoral students and reduced to 13 based on ambiguity and redundancy. A sample of 267 student respondents was asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement on 6-point scales where 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree (sample item: I often feel guilty about overeating at meals). Using these data, the 13-item scale was reduced to six items based on exploratory factor analysis and evaluation of Cronbach's alpha. The exploratory factor analysis resulted in a two-factor solution that explained over 74% of the variance in the data. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .85. This appropriateness of this two-factor scale for eating guilt was then confirmed via confirmatory factor analysis. Consistent with theoretical conceptualizations, scale items reflect guilt by omission (not doing what one feels one *should* do) and guilt by commission (doing what one *should not* do). Respondents in the main study which tested a structural model involving eating guilt were 79 male and 87 female students at a large Midwestern university.

Tests of Relationships in the model

The model hypothesized eating guilt as a central mediating variable. Hypothesized antecedents of eating guilt were concern for appearance and concern for healthy food. Consequences of guilt were making reparations, the physical appearance component of self esteem and preoccupation with health. An explicitly affective component of guilt based on a modified version of the Harder and Lewis (1987) Personal Feelings Questionnaire was used to measure eating guilt-evoked feelings.

Tests of the model indicate factorial invariance between males and females in the measurement of latent variables. That is, the measurement items load similarly on the latent variables for males and females. Also, all scales to measure the independent and dependent variables showed a factor structure consistent with theory and acceptable levels of coefficient alpha. Cronbach's alpha for the eating guilt scale was .85.

Consistent with theory, guilt leads both males and females to make reparations (i.e., by exercising or eating less at the next meal). Guilt also seems to lead both men and women to a preoccupation with health. The negative feelings associated with guilt strongly mediate the effect of guilt on self-esteem for both males and females. That is, guilt as measured by statements incorporating both cognitive evaluations and feelings had no direct effect on physical appearance self-esteem. One plausible interpretation of the mediating role of these strong negative feelings is that people also have very strong feelings about their physical appearance. Once the strongest feelings surrounding guilt have been accounted for, the less affective component of guilt has little effect on self-esteem.

Interesting gender differences also emerged in this study. Women were more apt than men to feel guilty if they were concerned with their appearance, and men tended to feel more eating guilt if they were more concerned with healthy food.

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The Effect of Irrelevant Information on Consumer Irritation and Attitudes: The Moderating Role of Need to Evaluate

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Past research has investigated the effect of irrelevant information related to the advertised product on consumers' beliefs in the product's ability to deliver the desired benefit. The results suggest that irrelevant product information systematically weakens consumers' beliefs that the product will provide the desired benefit. An interesting question that follows is if the impact of brand related irrelevant information is considerable to the extent it may systematically weaken the impact of diagnostic information, then what would be the impact of non-brand related irrelevant information, as it is likely to be in the context of cross-selling? Is the impact of such irrelevant information negative to the extent that it causes irritation in consumers? Since irritation can have negative consequences, does such irrelevant information lead to negative reactions toward the focal product as well as the advertiser? The above questions assume importance when—in an attempt to make additional sales—advertisers and salespeople frequently expose consumers to a substantial amount of information that may be irrelevant to the product under consideration.

The current paper explores consumers' reactions to information that is irrelevant to the product offering itself, as is likely to happen in a cross-selling context. We posit that consumers are likely to be more irritated when they are exposed to descriptions and offers of products that are completely unrelated to the focal product (i.e., highly irrelevant information) than when these products are viewed as complementary to the focal product (i.e., less irrelevant information).

Based on excitation transfer theory and recency effects, it is suggested that the irritation elicited as a result of exposure to information that is not relevant to the focal product may negatively affect consumers' attitudes toward the advertiser, the focal brand, and their purchase intentions. We further posit consumer irritation will be elicited in different degrees in consumers who differ in their propensity to evaluate information. In other words, the individual level variable—need to evaluate—will moderate the elicitation of irritation in consumers and its subsequent transfer to attitudes towards the advertiser and the advertised focal brand.

A 2 (nature of irrelevant information: highly irrelevant vs. less irrelevant) X 2 (need to evaluate: high vs. low) between-subjects design was used to test the proposed hypotheses. Seventy-two undergraduate students received course credit for participating in the experiment. Out of these, twenty-eight students were males and forty-four were females. The subjects were randomly assigned to the two conditions related to the nature of information: highly irrelevant vs. less irrelevant. Need to evaluate was a measured variable. The subjects completed a questionnaire which contained a scenario. The subjects were asked to imagine that they had called the toll-free number in the ad for the abdominal exerciser and were in a conversation with a sales representative. The scenarios contained information that varied in its degree of irrelevance—highly irrelevant vs. less irrelevant.

The results of this study show support for the moderating influence of consumers' need to evaluate. Specifically, it was found that highly irrelevant information leads to higher levels of irritation and the effect is greater for consumers with a high need to evaluate than for consumers with a low need to evaluate. Consequently, consumers with a high need to evaluate displayed lower attitudes

toward the advertiser and the focal brand, as well as lower intentions to purchase the focal brand compared to consumers with low need to evaluate. Finally as hypothesized, irritation is seen to completely mediate the effects of irrelevant information and need to evaluate on consumers' attitudes toward the advertiser, the focal brand and their intentions to purchase.

Our study supports the excitation transfer theory in that consumers' negative feelings such as irritation may be transferred to their subsequent judgments. This is because residual arousal, such as feelings of irritation from preceding emotional experiences or behaviors, may be carried over to subsequent experiences or behaviors. In addition, recency effects may also explain our findings. Since consumers were exposed to irrelevant information immediately before forming judgments of the advertiser and the advertised brand, it may be argued that this irrelevant information was more salient in the minds of the consumers. Overall, our findings suggest that irritation, an under-researched construct in marketing, may have serious and undesirable implications for consumer attitudes. Thus, it becomes critical to identify the causes of irritation in consumers from a theoretical as well as managerial point of view. Knowledge of factors that irritate consumers is critical since consumers are often exposed to cross-selling situations.

From a managerial point of view, our findings may be deemed as disturbing and problematic for advertisers or marketers involved in cross-selling. Our findings assume importance especially because advertisers and salespersons often attempt to increase their overall sales by offering products which may not be related to the focal product or to each other, thus increasing the likelihood of a negative response from the consumer. In addition, since our results indicate that the high need to evaluate individuals show higher irritation levels and unfavorable attitudes toward the advertiser, the focal brand, and intentions to purchase products, it is suggested here that advertisers and the researchers may consider need to evaluate and other such individual level variables to understand the differences in cognitive and affective processing.

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A Grounded Typology of Consumer Coping Strategies Within the Context of Infertility Treatment

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In recent years, researchers in consumer behavior have increasingly recognized that people may encounter significant obstacles when attempting to achieve goals related to consumption. One research stream demonstrating the salience of this topic focuses on understanding the coping strategies consumers employ when they experience and attempt to manage negative or mixed emotions in a variety of consumer contexts. Coping has been defined as “a multidimensional set of cognitions and behaviors called upon to help the person manage or tolerate the demands imposed by chronic or acute stressors.” (Eckenrode, 1991, p.3).

In contrast to studies that examine how individuals cope with consumption challenges during difficult life stages of their life cycles, this paper focuses on how consumers cope as they use marketplace choices to help them *progress* to a desired stage in the life cycle—parenthood. Although 90% of childless married couples say they would like to have children, infertility affects one in six married couples in the U.S. (May, 1995). Moreover, consumers now spend an around \$2 billion a year on infertility services, and the average costs of “Assisted Reproductive Technology” treatments such as insemination and in vitro fertilization range from \$4,000 to \$11,000 per attempt (De Witt, 1993), with most procedures not covered by insurance. While demand for infertility treatments has skyrocketed, and while these services are typically emotionally charged, prolonged, and extremely costly, to date few scholars in consumer behavior have explored this context.

One instrument that is well known in psychology, and that was designed to capture the cognitive and behavioral coping strategies used in stressful situations, is the “Ways of Coping” survey. Folkman et al. (1986) applied this survey to their study of a variety of stressful situations, and factor analysis revealed people used eight distinct coping strategies. Our research on infertility has led us to believe these strategies are neither mutually exclusive nor collectively exhaustive. Specifically, as we consulted both our naturalistic data and the literature on coping, we honed the following research questions:

1. How relevant are the eight coping strategies identified by Folkman et al. (1986) in consumers’ own descriptions of their infertility experiences?
2. What other types of coping strategies (if any) do consumers employ in the context of seeking infertility treatment?

We explored these questions by conducting in-depth personal interviews with 20 women and 3 men experiencing infertility in the U.S. and Canada from May 2002 until February 2003. Informants ranged in age from 28–47 years, were from a variety of geographic locations, represented a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, and were mostly white. Three researchers (two professors and a graduate student) read all of the interviews several times for familiarity. Each author was then primarily responsible for rigorously coding one third of the interviews for the presence of the eight coping strategies identified by Folkman et al. (1986), assigning their informants’ coping strategies to one of eight categories, or

creating and naming emergent categories if none of these *a priori* strategies were descriptive of our informants’ coping behavior.

Our findings reveal that the Folkman et al. typology is somewhat useful in interpreting the coping strategies used by consumers when they manage the stress they incur when being treated for infertility. Moreover, we find there are four categories of stressors that are relevant within this context: impediments to achieving the goal of becoming a parent, emotions, information uncertainty, and failure (interim and terminal). Our other findings include: 1) the absence of the escape/avoidance coping strategy as described by Folkman, et al. in our text; 2) the fact that taking responsibility for one’s infertility emerged not as a coping strategy but as a stressor, and 3) the emergence of several distinct strategies under the umbrella of the general strategies described by Folkman et al. Examples with respect to the latter point include various types of painful problem solving, such as active problem solving, leadership, simultaneous problem solving and acquiring and deploying resources. Our findings demonstrate the value of a grounded-theory approach to understanding coping, and call for creation of more discerning measures of coping within a high-stress context where failure rather than success may be the norm.

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Consumer Evaluation of Multiple Internal Reference Prices

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the consumers' general view of each of multiple IRPs in terms of importance and usage propensity for price judgments, the effort devoted to its formation, and whether its adoption is universal through all product categories and brands. Findings are as follows. First, in terms of importance, usage propensity, and effort, a normal price is highly evaluated and the highest-observed and lowest-acceptable prices less so. Second, the normal and expected prices are likely to be used over many product categories, whereas the lowest-acceptable price is not. Third, purchased price is likely to be used over many brands, whereas reservation price is not.

INTRODUCTION

An internal reference price (IRP) is known to have a multidimensional nature. That is, IRP has multiple operational definitions even though the conceptual definition of IRP is clearly defined. Winer (1988) presented eight common IRPs and organized them into five prices: fair, reservation, lowest acceptable, expected, and perceived. Although IRPs have been a focus of marketing research in the past, most have examined the importance of IRPs in consumers' purchase decisions (for an early review, see Kalyanaram and Winer 1995), explored promotional tools that affected IRPs (e.g., Folks and Wheat 1995; Kalwani and Yim 1992; Lichtenstein and Bearden 1989), or measured the accuracy of IRPs (e.g., Helgeson and Beatty 1987; Mazumdar and Monroe 1990). Consequently, the operationalization of IRPs has been unrestrained and various actions have been adopted. Previous studies that measured several IRPs found that some levels were fairly similar (e.g., Bearden et al. 1992; Diamond and Campbell 1989; Folkes and Wheat 1985). Nevertheless, each IRP is conceptually different and consumers are likely to use them differently depending on product type, consumer characteristics or purchase occasions. Therefore, investigations on the multidimensional nature of an IRP are needed, especially on the type of IRP used, factors that affect its adoption, and the perceived difference of each IRP.

As mentioned above, this topic has attracted the attention of few researchers. However, research on the topic recently has increased. Chandrashekar and Jagpal (1995) presented the first study of this and demonstrated that consumers used IRPs (fair, reservation, normal, and lowest prices seen) independently to evaluate an offered price, instead of combining them into an overall unitized IRP prior to making an evaluation. Then, Chandrashekar (2001) extended the study of Chandrashekar and Jagpal and showed that this non-unitized process was used regardless of the level of product involvement. However, product involvement affected the number and types of IRPs utilized; while high-involvement consumers used only reservation price, low-involvement consumers used fair and normal prices as IRPs. Klein and Ogleshorpe (1987) classified multiple IRPs into three categories that were not mutually exclusive: aspirational, market, and historical IRPs. The aspirational IRP was based on consciously established goals or targets for price, the market IRP on the perceptions of price levels in the marketplace, and the historical IRP on consumers' purchase experience. By following this classification, Vaidyanathan et al. (2000) investigated the effects of aspirational IRP (AIRP) and market IRP (MIRP) on deal attitude and purchase intention. The AIRP was operationalized by fair and reservation prices and MIRP by lowest market and normal prices. They showed that consumer

use of AIRP and MIRP depended on the level of consumer confidence in IRP estimates and on the type of consumer response. When price uncertainty was low, AIRP influenced purchase intention and MIRP deal attitude. However, when price uncertainty was high, only AIRP influenced deal attitude and no IRPs were regarded in forming purchase intention. Subsequently, Vaidyanathan and Muehling (1999) derived theoretically that AIRP was more likely to be used when product knowledge was low, but price consciousness high, whereas MIRP was more likely to be used when both product knowledge and price consciousness were high. Furthermore, Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2001) demonstrated that AIRP was used when product involvement was low and MIRP when it was high. Finally, Shirai (2003) investigated the number and types of IRPs utilized for products that differed in perceived price expensiveness and product involvement. The number of IRPs utilized was found to increase as perceived price expensiveness and product involvement increased. While normal and expected prices were commonly used among the products, fair, reservation, lowest-acceptable, and average-observed prices were used when perceived price expensiveness and product involvement were high, and purchased price was used when they were low. Also, Shirai showed that combinations of multiple IRPs utilized were similar, but the most important IRP varied among consumers.

The above studies have targeted just one or only a few product categories; therefore, their findings have not yet reached generalization. Accordingly, some of the findings are not consistent. In particular, the results provided by Chandrashekar (2001), Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2001) and Shirai (2003) seem to contradict each other in terms of consumer use of reservation and fair prices. Chandrashekar showed that reservation price was used when purchase involvement was high and a fair price when it was low. In Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal's study, both prices were used when product involvement was low. However, Shirai showed that both prices were used when it was high. These studies, however, differed in the type of product involvement and the product category they focused on. While the first two studies looked at the involvement within a product category (running shoes in Chandrashekar and coffeemakers in Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal), Shirai looked at the involvement among different product categories (personal computers, cellular phones, and shampoo). Thus, further investigations are necessary, especially on the type of IRPs utilized for different product categories and in respect of consumer characteristics.

Given that consumer use of IRP for price judgments is changeable, some questions arise regarding how consumers basically think of each IRP without assuming particular purchase situations by specifying a product category, brand, contest, or shopping purpose. Do consumers really perceive each IRP differently? If so, on what aspect, do they differ? This study aimed to find some answers to those questions. More specifically, instead of focusing on particular product categories, this study aimed to investigate consumers' general views toward various IRPs in terms of importance and usage propensity for price judgments, and the effort devoted to its formation. Our interest in elucidating the perceived effort devoted to the formation of IRPs was motivated by Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2001). They assumed that MIRP was more data driven and more analytic than AIRP so that consumers who use MIRP are considered to have high product involvement. Since they did not examine this view empirically, whether the

TABLE 1
Mean Value of Each IRP

	Importance	Usage propensity	Involvement	Category specific	Brand specific
FP	5.698	4.377	4.302	4.887	4.528
RP	5.075	5.208	4.151	5.019	5.226
LAP	4.340	4.038	3.566	5.453	4.774
LOP	5.226	5.642	4.283	4.792	4.340
HOP	4.075	3.943	3.491	4.264	4.321
AOP	5.906	5.698	4.528	4.094	4.057
NP	6.472	6.113	4.642	3.396	4.245
EP	5.472	6.075	4.283	3.491	4.509
PP	5.585	5.453	3.868	4.189	3.887

formation of MIRP actually required more effort than AIRP is not clarified. Accordingly, we investigated this and also whether consumers felt that the use of each IRP depended on product category or on brand. The latter enabled us to see whether consumers were likely to use each of the IRPs in price judgments of most product categories or most brands.

METHOD

Data were collected from 53 undergraduate student subjects by a survey questionnaire. Prior to participation in the survey, the subjects were briefed about the concept of IRP and given a specific description of nine operational IRPs: fair price (FP), reservation price (RP), lowest-acceptable price (LAP), lowest-observed price (LOP), highest-observed price (HOP), average-observed price (AOP), normal price (NP), expected price (EP), and purchased price (PP). These IRPs have appeared in previous research. Based on the Klein and Oglethorpe (1987) classification, FP, RP, LAP, and EP may be categorized as AIRP and LOP, HOP, AOP, and NP as MIRP. PP is historical IRP; however, and it is likely to be related to both AIRP and MIRP as noted by Vaidyanathan et al. (2000, p.181).

Then a questionnaire was distributed to subjects and these five questions were asked for each IRPs:

- Q1: "In general, do you think that this price is necessary in evaluating the validity of an offered price?"
- Q2: "In general, do you consider this price when evaluating the validity of an offered price?"
- Q3: "Suppose that you use this price to evaluate the validity of an offered price. Do you think that it takes some time and effort for you to decide how much this price should be?"
- Q4: "Do you think that whether to use this price for your price judgments depends on product category? That is, you might not use this price for all product categories?"
- Q5: "Do you think that whether to use this price for your price judgments depends on brand? That is, you might not use this price for all brands?"

Q1 measured the perceived importance of each IRP for price judgments, Q2 whether each IRP is commonly used in price judgments, Q3 the level of involvement devoted toward each IRP, and Q4 and Q5 whether the use of the price is universal throughout product categories or brands. Hereinafter, Q1 is referred to as the

"importance" feature, Q2 as "usage-propensity", Q3 as "involvement", Q4 as "category-specific", and Q5 as "brand-specific". This design can be considered as a single, nine-level within-subjects experimental design. Each IRP was again described specifically. The order of presenting these IRPs was alternated. Subjects were asked to answer each question on a seven-point scale anchored by "1=Not at all" and "7=Very Much". Subjects also rated their level of price consciousness and importance of price in purchase decisions on a five-point scale.

RESULTS

Before examining individual repeated-measures of ANOVA on each measure of five features (importance, usage propensity, involvement, category-specific, and brand-specific), we carried out a one-way MANOVA using IRP type (nine different IRPs) as dependent variables. The MANOVA revealed an overall significant effect of IRP type ($Wilk's\lambda=.53, F=7.83, p<.0001$). Therefore, follow up ANOVAs were performed for each of the five features. The mean values of the nine IRPs for each feature are presented in Table 1. Table 1 shows that each feature varied among the nine IRPs.

With regard to the importance of price judgments (Q1), ANOVA demonstrated that some of the nine IRPs differed significantly ($F(8, 468)=14.58, p<.0001$). Also, the following results were found by Tukey test. First, the importance of NP was significantly more than RP, LAP, LOP, HOP, and PP. Second, the importance of FP, AOP, EP, and PP was significantly more than LAP and HOP. Third, the importance of HOP was significantly less than FP, RP, LOP, AOP, NP, and PP. Lastly, the importance of LAP was significantly less than FP, LOP, AOP, and PP. These results indicated that in particular, the need for price judgments was relatively high for NP and low for HOP. Also, the results indicated that in terms of the level of importance as IRP, it was inappropriate to classify IRPs as MIRP or AIRP since each member IRP in the same category had a different level. Within the AIRP category, some IRPs were perceived to be more important than others (e.g., EP vs. LAP; FP vs. LAP). Also, within the MIRP category, some IRPs were perceived to be more important than others (e.g., NP vs. HOP; AOP vs. HOP).

Regarding the usage-propensity for price judgments (Q2), the ANOVA revealed that some of the nine IRPs differed significantly ($F(8, 468)=15.58, p<.0001$). Also, Tukey tests indicated the following: first, NP and EP were used significantly more than FP, LAP, and HOP. Second, HOP was used significantly less than RP,

LOP, AOP, NP, EP, and PP. Third, LAP was used significantly less than RP, LOP, AOP, and PP. Lastly, FP was used significantly less than LOP, AOP, and PP. These results indicated that in particular, the usage propensity for price judgments was relatively high for NP and EP and low for HOP and LAP. Also, similar to the importance feature, these results indicated that in terms of the usage level of IRPs, it was inappropriate to classify IRPs as MIRP or AIRP since each member IRP in the same category had a different level (e.g., EP vs. FP for AIRP and NP vs. HOP for MIRP).

ANOVA revealed that some of the nine IRPs differed significantly in the involvement devoted to its formation (Q3; $F(8, 468)=3.0, p<.01$). Tukey tests showed that the involvement with HOP was significantly less than AOP and NP, and that of LAP was significantly less than NP. These results indicated that in particular, the time and effort spent on deciding the level of NP was relatively high and HOP and LAP was relatively low. Furthermore, these results indicated that even within MIRP, the level of effort spent in forming each IRP tended to be different (e.g., NP vs. HOP).

Whether the use for price judgments depended on product category was shown to vary among the nine IRPs (Q4; $F(8, 468)=8.8, p<.0001$). Tukey tests indicated that the extent of NP and EP were significantly less than FP, RP, LAP, and LOP. Also, the extent of LAP was found to be significantly more than HOP, AOP, and PP. These results indicated that NP and EP were likely to be used on many product categories, whereas the use of LAP was likely to be limited to certain product categories. Also, these results indicated that it was inappropriate to classify IRPs as MIRP or AIRP when considering the product-specific feature, since each member IRP had a different level although they were in the same category (e.g., RP vs. EP for AIRP and LOP vs. NP for MIRP).

Whether the use for price judgments depended on the brand was shown to vary among the nine IRPs (Q5; $F(8, 468)=2.78, p<.01$). According to Tukey tests, the extent of RP was significantly more than AOP and PP. These results indicated that PP was likely to be used on many brands, whereas the use of RP was likely to be limited to certain brands.

We additionally note that there was not a strong, but positive correlation between the importance and usage-propensity features ($r=0.62, p<.0001$), between the importance and involvement features ($r=0.4, p<.0001$), between the usage-propensity and involvement features ($r=0.39, p<.0001$), and between the category-specific and brand-specific features ($r=0.5, p<.0001$). These indicate that the IRPs that consumers tend to use are the ones they think are necessary to judge an offered price. Moreover, the IRPs used for certain product categories had a tendency to be used for certain brands.

DISCUSSION

This paper has presented findings regarding how consumers generally perceive each of multiple operational IRPs without considering any specific purchase situations such as product category, brand, context, and shopping purpose. More specifically, this study investigated consumers' general view toward each IRP in terms of the following features: importance and usage propensity for price judgments, effort devoted to its formation, and whether the use of each IRP for price judgments depended on product category or brand. Since consumer use of IRP is affected by many factors, we thought it was important to understand their basic views, before hypothesizing certain purchase situations.

The results obtained from a survey done by questionnaire examining nine IRPs (fair, reservation, lowest-acceptable, lowest-observed, highest-observed, average-observed, normal, expected, and purchased prices) indicated that some IRPs were perceived

quite differently on the five features. In terms of importance, usage propensity, and effort, normal price was evaluated highly and highest-observed and lowest-acceptable prices were evaluated relatively less. Moreover, normal and expected prices were likely to be used on many product categories, while lowest-acceptable price was likely to be used on particular product categories. Further, purchase price was likely to be used on many brands, while reservation price was likely to be used only on certain brands. Consequently, it is inappropriate to treat each IRP similarly when directly measuring consumers' IRP or when planning to affect consumers' IRP at a desired level by using marketing tools. Also, further development of theories that explain consumer use of multiple IRPs is definitely needed.

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Inferred Transaction Value: A Key to Understanding the Effects of Price Bundling

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper examines a common marketing tactic called price bundling, defined as the practice of marketing multiple products and/or services at a bundle price (Johnson, Herrmann, and Bauer 1999). Examples include the purchase of a car where the basic model and options are bundled into a package or the purchase of a skiing pass good for multiple days. Behavioral research on price bundling has traditionally viewed the psychological impact of price bundling in separation from, and as violation of, its economic logic (Prelec and Loewenstein 1998; Soman and Gourville 2001). This frame overlooks the possibility that some of the psychological impact of price bundling may be driven by its economic logic.

This paper proposes and tests a psychological impact of price bundling that is derived from its economic logic. We call it the inferred transaction value (hereafter, ITV) effect. It has become a popular belief that bundles typically involve a discount (Estelami 1999; Yadav and Monroe 1994). Since prior beliefs can drive perception and judgment (Abba, Broniarczyk, Shimp, and Urbany 1994), consumers may infer a bundle saving or transaction value (Thaler 1985) when being presented with a bundled offer even in the absence of explicit information about bundle savings. And because signal of a deal is sufficient to generate consumer reaction (Inman, McAlister, and Hoyer 1990), this ITV should enhance consumer evaluation, and hence purchase likelihood, of the bundle offer.

The ITV hypothesis offers new insights into the direction and mechanism of the psychological impact of price bundling. The dominant perspective in the literature relies on mental accounting's loss aggregation principle (Thaler 1985) to explain pre purchased bundle effects, e.g., the impact of price bundling on consumer perceptions of an offer (Stremersch and Tellis 2002). Assuming that price information is coded as a relative loss, Johnson, Herrmann, and Bauer (1999) suggested that price bundling enhances consumers' evaluations because consumers perceive a single loss as less punishing than multiple losses. We believe that this assumption is inconsistent with mental accounting theory. According to this theory, the cost of good is treated as losses or gains when being evaluated against a reference point, e.g., in cases of a price change (Mazumdar and Jun, 1993), but the price of a product in and by itself is unlikely to be coded as a loss. As Thaler (1985) suggested, "... the cost of the good is *not* treated as a loss. Given the steepness of the loss function near the reference point it is hedonically insufficient to code cost as loss" (p. 205). Therefore, we argue that it is the ITV, rather than the lost aggregation effect, that accounts for Johnson et al's (1999) empirical findings about the positive impact of price bundling on consumer perception of the offer. This implies that, contrary to the convention, the positive impact of price bundling may not be universal, because price bundling may not always produce ITV.

The ITV hypothesis can also explain the impact of price bundling on post-purchased consumption behavior. Soman et al (2001) proposed the transaction-decoupling hypothesis, which holds that price bundling further decouples the sunk cost of the bundle from its benefits, thereby reducing the likelihood of consuming the entire bundle. The ITV effect provides another mechanism for this effect. Specifically, the inferred bundle saving may reduce the perceived sunk cost of the bundle itself. While the two hypotheses are complementary, the inferred transaction cost hypothesis has the advantage of being able to account for both pre and

post purchased bundle effects, which to date have been two relatively unrelated areas of research on price bundling.

We conducted three lab studies to test the ITV hypothesis. In study one respondents were presented with a bundled (unbundled) offer and then asked to indicate how much they think the total price of an equivalent unbundled (bundled) offer would have been. As a triangulation, respondents provided open-ended rationales for their response. As expected, respondents presented with the bundled (unbundled) offer believed that an equivalent unbundled (bundled) offer would have been 10.2% more expensive (6.9% cheaper) than the original offer. In study 2, three automobile offers were presented; the first two were identical to the bundled and unbundled offers in Johnson et al's (1999), while the third was a bundle offer in which the ITV was excluded (by indicating that the price of an equivalent unbundled offer would have been the same). Consumer preference for the bundle versus unbundled offer was reversed as ITV was removed: Once ITV was removed respondents' evaluation of the bundled offer drops significantly (from 5.08 to 4.48, $p < .05$), to a level even lower than that of the unbundled offer. Study 3 modified the skiing scenario employed in Soman et al's (2001). Respondents imagined that they had bought separate individual one-day tickets (unbundled condition), and then indicated how much they think the total price would be for a/ single ski pass (bundled condition), and b/ a set of tickets (semibundled condition). As expected, respondents believed the bundled offer would have been 20.6% cheaper than the unbundled offer, and the semibundled purchase would have been 14.4% cheaper than the unbundled purchase.

Overall, these studies provided strong evidence that the ITV effect is robust in both product and service bundling contexts and can provide alternative explanations for the results found by Johnson et al (1999) and Soman et al (2001). Study 2 also provided some evidence that it is the ITV, rather than the loss aggregation effect, that accounts for the positive impact of price bundling on consumer perception of the bundle offer. This finding has important theoretical and practical implications. Because price bundling, or more generally, price integration, may not always produce ITV, this tactic may not always enhance consumer perception of the offer, and thus, contrary to the convention (Stremersch et al 2002), is not always an optimal tactic for firms. For example, because integrating base price and surcharge into one inclusive price does not involve any inferred discount, it may be better to partition price information to take advantage of the heuristic effect (Mortwitz, Green, and Johnson 1998).

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Did You Hear What My Friend Paid! Examining the Consequences of Social Comparisons of Prices

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the impact of social comparisons of prices. It considers the effects of price comparisons on consumers when they get a better bargain and when they pay more. This study finds that satisfaction with both the store and the product purchased are lower when consumers pay more than others. Findings also suggest that prices consumers are willing to pay more easily go down than up, where as perceptions of prices stores normally charge stay the same or even increase.

Does it matter to consumers what others pay for products? Consumers have ample opportunities to find special bargains in retail stores, even though bargaining is not as common in the United States as it is in some societies. This means that different consumers often end up paying very different prices for similar products and services. Hagglng and internet bidding are examples of contexts in which the pricing for the sale of products varies considerably by customer (Heun 2001). Although electronic forums allow for increasingly sophisticated methods to set profit maximizing prices for each customer, many of these types of transactions still take place in the traditional retail environment. University and medical fees are often based on willingness and or ability to pay for a particular service. Even for consumer products in which direct negotiation of prices is not possible, prices may vary quite a bit depending on the retailer and the location.

One way in which consumers can find out about differences in prices is through social comparisons. Social influence can be a source of informational influence on purchases. Information from friends or peers is sought by consumers to make purchases, especially for symbolic products (Midgely 1983). Information passed along by others can also be a one factor in facilitating fads (Bikchandani, Hershleifer and Welch 1998). Specifically, price information can also be shared among consumers (e.g., Feick and Price 1987). Sharing of price information can have an impact on the effectiveness of targeted promotions (Feinberg, Krishna, and Zhang 2002).

This paper is an exploratory study examining the impact of social comparisons of prices. It considers the effects of price comparisons on consumers when they get a better bargain and when they pay more. It examines the consequences for satisfaction with the product and the retailer and product repurchase intentions. It also looks at the impact of appraisals on and the emotional reactions to the price comparison process.

Price Comparisons and Satisfaction

Comparisons with consumers who purchased the same product at a cheaper price can lead to dissatisfaction with a previously satisfactory purchase. These are social comparisons that can lower the reference price so that a consumer can become dissatisfied even when everything about the product they just purchased remains the same. An early study, Brickman and Campbell (1971), identified social comparison as potentially the most potent influence to raise comparison standards and create dissatisfaction. They found that this comparison increases standards that can result in a negative discrepancy with the performance of the existing product. Social comparisons of prices paid for a product should do the same.

A link between social comparisons and dissatisfaction with income has already been identified. Management studies have indicated that the pay of referent others can be an important part of pay dissatisfaction (Scholl et al. 1987). Martin (1981) suggested relative deprivation as an important construct to explain dissatisfaction with pay. More recently, Sweeney, McFarlin and Inderridien (1990) tested relative deprivation across a variety of contexts and found it to be an important predictor of pay satisfaction. Dissatisfaction regarding differences in pay involves appraisals of inequity and injustice (Martin 1981). Would these same appraisals be made if the entity of comparison was the outflow of money as part of a cost rather than the inflow of income?

Unfavorable social comparisons can lead to dissatisfaction even without these negative appraisals. Richins (1991) found that idealized images of women in advertising can invite unfavorable comparisons with the self. These comparisons led to raised comparison standards and to dissatisfaction with the self.

Impact on Satisfaction. These findings can be applied to price comparisons. When consumers compare prices with a friend who has paid a lower price, they should feel less satisfied with the store where they bought the product than when they compare with friends who paid a higher price.

Price Comparisons and Reference prices

A consumer's *internal reference price*, or the price that he or she would expect to be charged for a given product in a given situation, is a standard which has been closely examined in the marketing literature (e.g. Kalwani and Yim 1992). Consumers are further exposed to *external* reference prices, or cues in the external environment such as prices suggested by merchants in order to influence the consumer's evaluation of an offering price. Consumers' evaluation of prices are influenced both by internal reference prices and by external reference prices (Rajendran and Tellis 1994).

Typically, a relatively high external reference price is provided so that the target price is "contrasted"—that is, seen as a bargain. For example, a sign or advertisement may compare a sale price to the "regular" price, that of a competing brand, the price of the same brand in a different store, the "manufacturer's suggested retail price," or an "original" price. There are limits to the credulity of the consumer, but Urbany, Bearden and Weilbaker (1988) and Lichtenstein and Bearden (1989) show that even "implausibly high" external reference prices tend to increase internal expectations. By contrast, Yadav and Seiders (1998) suggest that the respective impact of new high and low price stimuli is quite asymmetric. Their results found that price expectations of consumers knowledgeable about a product category were influenced significantly more by prices that were below their established reference price levels.

Impact on Internal Reference Prices. Internal reference prices may be influenced downward by external sources of comparison. When a consumer compares prices paid for a product with bargain prices paid by another, this lower price forms the anchor by which other prices are judged. Thus, exposure to lower prices paid by others can lead to lowering of consumers' internal reference prices for that product category. Similarly, under some circumstances consumers may also raise their internal reference prices by com-

parison to the external reference prices of others that paid more (cf. Urbany, et al. 1988).

Social Comparisons and Emotions

Social comparisons can elicit quite a range of emotional responses. They can result in a reduction of closeness with the comparison other (Pleban and Tesser 1981), disparagement of the comparison other (Achee, Tesser, and Pilkington 1994), anxiety (Tesser and Collins 1988) or jealousy (DeSteno and Salovey 1996). They can also be mixed with positive emotions such as happiness (Ackerman, MacInnis and Folkes 2000).

Impact on Emotions. Within the context of pricing, Feinberg, Krishna, and Zhang (2002) present experimental data to suggest consumers loyal to a firm felt “envy” when special pricing is made available to potential “switchers” currently served by other firms. When consumers compare with friends who have found cheaper prices for the same product they are likely to feel envy, anxiety and even anger. By contrast, when they compare with friends who have paid more for the same product they should feel positive feelings such as happiness, gratefulness and even pride.

METHOD

The research required a method that would allow us to explore and compare reference prices, product and store satisfaction, emotions and appraisals when the comparison was with a more expensive price for the same product and when it was with a cheaper price. To facilitate the comparison and to control for individual differences in emotionality, appraisal biases, and optimistic vs. pessimistic tendencies, we used a within-subjects design. Fifty-five undergraduate business students served as respondents. All who agreed to participate completed the task.

Procedure

Subjects were asked to remember and describe in detail two experiences involving the social comparisons of prices (cf. Roseman, Antoniou and Jose 1990; Smith and Ellsworth 1987). In one condition, subjects were asked to describe a time when they purchased a product and then soon after discovered a friend who had found the same product for a much cheaper price. In another condition, subjects were asked to describe a time when their friend purchased a product and soon after discovered that they (the subject) had found the same product for a much cheaper price. The order in which the reports were generated was randomized.

In each of the conditions, respondents were asked to fill out a survey with various measures of satisfaction, appraisals, emotional responses and assessments of reference price. Responses were paired by subjects’ mothers’ birth dates. The two reports were separated by 45 minutes of filler activity.

Clothing was mentioned most frequently by subjects in both conditions ($M_{\text{selfbargain}}=24$, $M_{\text{otherbargain}}=18$). Entertainment ($M_{\text{selfbargain}}=8$) and electronics equipment ($M_{\text{selfbargain}}=6$) were the second and third most frequently mentioned in the condition in which subjects bought at the cheaper price, hereafter referred to as the *self-bargain condition*. Communications equipment ($M_{\text{selfbargain}}=9$) and entertainment ($M_{\text{selfbargain}}=6$) were the second and third most frequently mentioned in the condition in the other person bought at the cheaper price, hereafter referred to as the *other-bargain condition*.

Measures

Social Comparison Emotions. A modified version of the emotion inventories of Burke and Edell (1989) and Richins (1997) was used to measure emotions elicited by a social comparison of products. Fifteen emotions, ten negative and five positive, were

measured were measured with single item measures and then clustered using factor analysis. Correlation and factor analyses revealed three groups of negative emotions and one group of positive emotions. Regret, loss and envy loaded on one factor ($M=1.38$, $a=.94$), anger frustration and stress loaded on second factor ($M=1.75$, $a=.91$), happiness, enjoyment and exhilaration loaded on a third factor that represented a sort of general state of happiness ($M=4.83$, $a=.90$), shame, humiliation and hate loaded on a fourth ($M=1.48$, $a=.95$) and gratefulness and pride loaded on a fifth factor that represented both internally and externally attributed positive feelings about an outcome ($M=3.96$, $a=.74$).¹

Appraisals. Twenty-one items, each using a seven-point agree-disagree Likert scale, were used to indicate the various appraisal dimensions. The scale was derived from Lazarus’ (1991) appraisal components and modified by a review of the reference price (Biswas, Pullig, Yagci and Dwane 2002; Janiszewski and Lichtenstein 1999; Schindler 1998; Lichtenstein and Bearden 1989), social comparison (Tesser 1990; Tesser and Collins 1988) and relative deprivation (Sweeney, McFarlin and Inderrieden 1991; Martin 1981) literatures.

Seven subscales were identified through factor analysis. The first measures whether subjects felt they could *undo what happened* ($M=5.48$, $a=.86$), while the second assesses how much subjects *cared about what happened* ($M=4.36$, $a=.92$). The third assesses how *good* the outcome was for the subject ($M=3.00$, $a=.94$). The fourth component measured perceived *unfairness* of the situation ($M=3.89$, $a=.97$). The fifth component, assesses the degree to which the situation *affected self-esteem* ($M=2.84$, $a=.97$). The sixth component measures the degree of *responsibility* subjects felt for the outcome of the situation ($M=4.61$, $a=.94$). A higher number indicates higher self-blame. The seventh assesses the degree of *control* subjects felt they had over the outcome of the situation ($M=4.56$, $a=.83$).

Prices for the product were measured by open-ended questions asking how much was paid by subjects and their friends. Five items were used to assess reference prices (cf. Lichtenstein & Bearden 1989). The first 3 items measured the prices that consumers would really want to pay for a product. One item asked subjects what a fair price for the product would be. A second item asked subjects what was the lowest price by which they thought the product could be obtained. The third item asked subjects what they expect to pay if they bought the item again. The fourth and fifth items measured what subjects perceived to be price norms for a product. The fourth item asked subjects what they felt the store where they purchased normally charges for the product. The fifth item asked subjects the same question about the store where the other person bought.²

Satisfaction for the product ($M=4.93$, $\alpha=.98$) and with the store ($M=3.96$, $\alpha=.97$) were measured using a three-item, seven-point, likert scale. Desire to repurchase the product ($M=3.91$, $\alpha=.87$) and to repurchase at the same store ($M=3.72$, $\alpha=.97$) were also measured using a three-item, seven-point likert scale. Both scales were anchored by “strongly disagree” and “extremely agree.” A lower number indicates disagreement.

Manipulation Checks. Open-ended questioning revealed that in every case the price for the self in the self-bargain condition was lower than the friend’s price and the price for the self in the other-bargain condition was higher than the friend’s price. There were no

¹This scale was used to compare differences in the same emotion between conditions.

²Given the variability in prices, a loglinear transformation was done. Since the results using the transformed data were very similar, the raw data was used for analysis.

TABLE 1
Means for Negative and Positive Emotion Conditions

Scale	Mean for "Self Bargain"	Mean for "Other Bargain"	t (54)
Emotion Measures:			
Regret	1.38	2.74	-5.80**
Anger	1.75	3.13	-5.03**
Happiness	4.83	2.20	7.58**
Shame	1.48	2.10	-2.77**
Positive Feelings About Outcome	3.96	1.66	7.72**
Consequences:			
Satisfaction with product	6.28	4.93	5.82 **
Satisfaction with store	5.64	3.96	5.77**
Repurchase product	4.54	3.91	2.29 *
Repurchase at store	4.91	3.72	4.12**
Appraisals:			
Undo the outcome	4.78	5.48	-2.44*
Care about the outcome	4.45	4.36	.18
Outcome was good for me	5.32	2.99	7.91 **
Outcome was unfair	2.59	3.89	-4.43**
Situation affected self-esteem	4.10	2.84	4.28**
Responsibility felt for outcome	4.82	4.61	.47
Control over present situation	4.33	4.56	-.77
Control over future	5.09	5.03	.29

* p<.05
** p<.01

significant differences between the cheaper price in the self-bargain condition and the cheaper price in the other-bargain condition ($M_{\text{selfbargain}}=126$, $M_{\text{otherbargain}}=162$, $t(54)=1.13$, $p=.27$). Similarly, there were no significant differences between the more expensive price in the other-bargain condition and the more expensive price in the self-bargain condition ($M_{\text{selfbargain}}=191$, $M_{\text{otherbargain}}=226$, $t(54)=1.18$, $p=.24$).

RESULTS

Comparisons between the emotions, satisfaction, repurchase intentions and appraisals for consumers in the self-bargain and other-bargain emotions conditions were done by paired sample t-tests. We also examined the difference between prices paid by subjects and what was considered a fair price, the lowest price they felt they could obtain the product and what they would pay again. Lastly, we analyzed the relationship of appraisals to satisfaction with the product, store and repurchase intentions by regression analysis.

Table 1 reveals clear differences between the "self-bargain" and "other-bargain" social comparison of price conditions (see Table 1). Consumers reported feeling happier and more proud in the "self-bargain" vs. the "other-bargain" social comparison of price situations, and reported feeling more regret, frustration and shame in "other-bargain" situations. "Other-bargain" social comparisons of prices were also associated with less satisfaction with the product, the store, as well as lesser desire to repurchase the product and to purchase again at the same store. In both the "self-bargain" and the "other-bargain" conditions, satisfaction was lower with the store than with the product.

Within conditions, happiness and envy were the most intensely experienced emotions. However, happiness was a more intensely experienced emotion in the "self-bargain" condition. In the "other bargain" condition, anger and regret were the two strongest emotions. Of these two, frustration was the marginally more intensely experienced emotion.

Social comparisons of prices also differed in the appraisal of situations in which the subjects or the friend, respectively, got the bargain Table 1 shows that consumers tended to appraise "other-bargain" situations as more unfair than "self-bargain" situations, and tended to appraise the "self bargain" situation as one for which outcomes were more desirable, and which had a greater impact on self esteem. On the other hand, subjects appraised "other-bargain" (vs. "self-bargain") situations as more easily undone.

The change in reference prices held by subjects was examined by a series of paired t-tests. Table 2 shows that reference prices more often differed from what the subjects paid when subjects compared with others who purchased at a lower price, than when they compared with those who purchased at a higher price. In the self-bargain condition, there was no significant difference between the price subjects paid and their perceptions of the fair price, the lowest price or the price that subjects expected to pay again. The price subjects paid was significantly lower than perceptions of the price normally charged both where subjects and where the other person bought.

By contrast, in the other-bargain condition, the results are the opposite. The price paid by subjects was significantly higher than either the "fair" price, the lowest price or the price subjects expected to pay again. It was not significantly different than the price

TABLE 2
Changes in Reference Prices

Self-bargain Condition:

t-value diff from self	Self Price	Reference Price	Other Price	t-value diff from other
.95	126	120 <i>fair price</i>	191	3.55**
1.43	126	107 <i>lowest price</i>	191	3.67**
1.16	126	115 <i>expect to pay again</i>	191	3.48**
1.99*	126	159 <i>"normal" price where I bought</i>	191	2.35*
2.07*	126	177 <i>"normal" price where other bought</i>	191	1.06

Other-bargain Condition:

t-value diff from self	Self Price	Reference Price	Other Price	t-value diff from other
2.88**	226	172 <i>fair price</i>	162	-1.18
3.46**	226	137 <i>lowest price</i>	162	2.17*
3.44**	226	152 <i>expect to pay again</i>	162	1.01
-1.26	226	245 <i>"normal" price where I bought</i>	162	-2.88**
0.55	226	220 <i>"normal" price where other bought</i>	162	-2.08*

* p<.05

** p<.01

normally charged either by the store where subjects or where the other person bought the product.

Differences in reference prices paid by the other person compared with the other revealed a similar pattern. In the self-bargain condition, the price paid by the other person was significantly higher than the fair price, the lowest price, the price subjects expected to pay again or the price normally charged at the store where the subject purchased the product. In the other-bargain condition, the price paid by the other person was significantly higher than the lowest price for the product and significantly lower than the price normally charged at stores where either the subject or the other person made the purchase.

Further insight into the reaction from social comparisons of prices is gleaned from regressions of appraisals on satisfaction and repurchase intentions (see Table 3). Dissatisfaction with a product from a social comparison of prices is evoked in response to

situations in which subjects feel there is unfairness. These results show that dissatisfaction with the store evoked from social comparison of possessions is driven by situations appraised as undesirable and having an impact on self-esteem. Desire to repurchase the product evoked from social comparison of prices is driven by situations appraised as being those that subjects do not care about and had an impact on self-esteem. Lastly, desire to repurchase at the same store is evoked when the outcome is appraised as being desirable and when it impacts self esteem. The remaining relationships between appraisals and satisfaction and desire to repurchase were insignificant, though some might gain significance with a larger sample size and greater power.

DISCUSSION

There was a fairly big difference in satisfaction and repurchase intentions between the comparisons in which subjects paid the

TABLE 3
Appraisals Generated from Social Comparisons as Predictors of Satisfaction and Repurchase Intentions

	Satisfaction Product Beta (t)	Satisfaction Store Beta (t)	Buy Again Product Beta (t)	Buy Again at Store Beta (t)
Appraisals:				
Undo the outcome	-.01 (-0.06)	.28 (1.89)	.18 (1.14)	.18 (1.35)
Care about outcome	.04 (0.33)	-.11 (-0.86)	-.29 (-2.01)*	-.01 (-0.10)
Outcome was good for me	.24 (1.63)	.53 (3.95)**	.26 (1.68)	.60 (4.68)**
Outcome was unfair	-.33 (-2.39)*	-.17 (-1.25)	.07 (0.48)	-.11(-0.86)
Situation affected self esteem	.07 (0.46)	.30 (2.31)*	.30 (2.00)*	.30 (2.37)*
Responsibility felt for outcome	.23 (1.57)	.08 (0.66)	.08 (0.56)	-.08 (-0.66)
Control over Present Situation	.06 (0.40)	.11 (0.77)	-.01 (-0.08)	.18 (1.43)
R ²	.43	.47	.25	.29

* p<.05

** p<.01

lower price and those in which their friend paid the lower price. Consumers were much less satisfied and much less likely to repurchase when they discovered that their friends had purchased at a lower price than when they found they got a better price. These comparisons affected satisfaction and repurchase intentions not just with the store but also with the product. Even though the products themselves were not at fault, they also seemed to be tainted by the situation.

Satisfaction and repurchase intentions were lower for the store than for the product in both conditions. To the extent that shoppers believe that stores have the ultimate control over prices charged, it is quite surprising that subjects evaluated the store less favorably than the product even when they actually get a nice deal. It is not clear what drives this outcome. The answer may lie in attributions for the store's pricing and promotional decisions. Alternatively, the formation of satisfaction with stores and products may involve different processes or may be influenced by different considerations. Future research needs to address the robustness and causes of this phenomenon.

Another key finding of this study is that there is an asymmetry of reference price change. When measuring what consumers were really willing to pay, reference prices only changed when consumers encountered lower prices. Exposure to higher prices in comparisons had no effect. Consumers seem to believe that the "real" price is not some higher price but always the lowest price in a situation. This price was even lower than the lowest observed price in one case. The perceived lowest price was significantly lower than that

which their friends paid in the "other bargain" condition. Perhaps the frustration felt at having paid more than another could have led subjects to feel that an even better price lay hidden somewhere else. Although internal references seem to eventually follow increased market prices, Assimilation-Contrast Theory and Range Theory (Janiszewski and Lichtenstein 1999) both suggest that numerous exposures to a price higher than the expected range may be needed before the new and higher price levels are accepted. By contrast, a single exposure to a low price indicates that it is feasible for a retailer to offer such a price at a profit.

The exceptions to this pattern are consumers' perceptions of the price normally charged at stores. In this case, consumers' reference prices were more influenced upward than downward. This was especially true in the other-bargain condition. Consumers may be attempting to preserve or enhance their evaluation of themselves as shoppers by maintaining or adjusting their comparison standards upward. When consumers pay the lower price, their "normal price" should be significantly higher, otherwise they would not be smart shoppers. When friends pay a lower price, subjects' reference prices should be equal to the higher prices that they paid; otherwise they would appear to be poor shoppers.

The results of this study suggest that there is a direct relationship between appraisals of fairness and product satisfaction but not with store satisfaction. These appraisals of fairness seem to be a factor in the spread of dissatisfaction with the store to the product. Just finding out a friend paid a lower price for the same product can make consumers upset at the store. If they feel cheated as well, they may

blame all parties in the process. Satisfaction with and desire to repurchase at the store depend heavily on overall happiness with the outcome and how much the price comparison affected self-esteem. Subjects may have had to feel that the higher prices paid were unfair before they became dissatisfied with the product as well. On the other hand, mere unhappiness with the store is enough to lower satisfaction, perhaps since it is the store that sets the price. Desire to repurchase the product was only impacted by how much subjects cared about what happened. The less they cared, more willing they were to purchase again.

This study also found that consumers feel a great deal of happiness and positive feelings about the outcome when they find a great deal. These were the strongest emotions felt in either condition. Pride is elicited by a good outcome for which people feel they are responsible (Lazarus 1991; Smith and Ellsworth 1987). Both of these appraisals were found to be associated with the “self-bargain” condition in this study. This finding also has support in past research that has found shopping—and especially successful shopping—can be quite an enjoyable experience (Schindler 1998; Babin et al. 1994; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). This study adds that finding a good bargain, and perhaps feeling proud about being a smart shopper, is an important factor in the pleasure of shopping.

Similarly, consumers feel a mixture of anger and regret when they discover they have paid a higher price than a friend. Subjects perceived the situation in the “other bargain condition” as unfair so that it is natural that they felt angry. Since responsibility felt by subjects for the outcome was equally strong in both conditions, a bad outcome should naturally elicit regret.

Nevertheless, our study is admittedly exploratory. We placed no restrictions on the context under which the social comparison of price took place, so the emotions elicited by these types of comparisons could vary widely depending on where they took place and what type of product was involved. Further, memory biases may have influenced the sort of experiences that subjects recalled.

IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

An examination of social comparisons of prices may help explain the dynamics of any context in which prices are not fixed, which includes not just dynamic pricing and bargaining but almost any retail market. The implications are serious for marketers that charge different prices to different customers. Consumers will be angry and will not be likely to shop at the same store. Manufacturers also need to be careful about pricing policies of distributors since customers will hold the products accountable for the pricing policies of the stores. Future research might address the dynamics by which consumers judge the extent to which manufacturers, intermediaries, and retailers, respectively, are responsible for retail prices and their fluctuations.

On the other hand, shopping for the best price seems to be a source of great pleasure for customers. Finding a better bargain elicited strong feelings of happiness and positive feelings regarding the outcome. This contradicts the popular opinion that consumers do not like to price comparison shop. Perhaps future research could look at the conditions in which consumers do and do not like to comparison shop. Further, additional research might address the question as to how much consumers learn from friends who receive better deals and whether such an appreciation for such learning may curtail resentment. The present research involved a comparison with bargains obtained with friends toward which subjects likely had considerable good will. Future research might address whether bargains received by strangers are resented more.

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The Influence of Price Difference and Equity Sensitivity on Customer Satisfaction in a Dynamic Pricing Environment

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates consumer reactions to a dynamic pricing situation. The results show that satisfaction with a transaction is impacted by knowledge of the price others paid for the same product. Participants who got a better deal than a comparative other rated their satisfaction higher than those who got a worse deal. The magnitude of the price difference mattered only when the deal was worse, resulting in satisfaction for the higher priced item being lower than for the lower priced item. Counter to our expectations, the Equity Sensitivity Index did not provide any significant explanation of price satisfaction.

Price promotion, a very popular tactic for increasing sales volume, immerses consumers in a sea of coupons, volume discounts, rebates, preferred customer discounts, holiday sales, and countless other forms of marketing. Because firms employ so many varieties of price promotion, many of which are available only to certain individuals or groups, different customers are often charged different net prices (Martins and Monroe, 1994). As a result, different customers may pay different prices even when buying the same item at the same time from the same seller.

As long as customers do not have the opportunity to compare transactions with other customers, judgments of fairness occur largely as a result of the buyer-seller relationship and the buyer's preconceived ideas regarding a fair price (referred to as *internal reference price*) for a particular item, based on perceived product quality and buyer sacrifice (Martins and Monroe, 1994). However, when consumers can "compare notes" about their transactions, decisions about what is fair take on a sizeable relative component as well (Monroe and Petroschius, 1981). That is, consumers' expectation that they should pay relatively equal net prices for what they purchase becomes a significant factor in their decisions about fair price.

Consumers evaluate their [potential] transactions in part by assessing transaction utility, the difference between the perceived fair price and the actual price of the item (Thaler, 1985). In determining an internal reference price, consumers take into account the motives of the firm (e.g., passing on costs vs. exploiting consumers) and an intuitive sense of what the price should be based on the conditions of the specific transaction and the prevailing conditions of similar transactions (Campbell, 1999).

Price differences in a traditional 'brick and mortar' setting are frequently obvious, as in the case of a grocery store where the reduced price for customers with a bonus card is clearly marked in close proximity to the higher price for customers without a bonus card. Reduced prices and rates for various groups are openly advertised in signage and media. Because the advertising identifies the type of discount and the group(s) receiving the discounted prices, consumers have information with which they can justify price differences based on their understanding of the benefits and sacrifices associated with membership in that group(s).

In contrast, Internet technology makes it possible for two consumers to access the same web site at the same time and get different prices on identical items, and to do so in virtual isolation from other consumers. This particular aspect of technology enables sellers to simultaneously offer a wide variety of prices to different individuals or groups without publicizing any information that can

be used as justification for priced differences by other individuals or groups.

Still, Internet consumers do compare transactions, though perhaps more deliberately and with fewer others. However, in the case of Internet transactions, the absence of justifying information substantially complicates the challenge of preventing perceptions of unfairness. Preventing such perceptions is critical because perceived unfairness in pricing leads to reduced intentions to buy (Campbell, 1999), an outcome exactly opposite that desired. Thus, understanding the process and outcomes of transaction comparisons becomes essential to successful pricing strategies. We believe the concept of equity sensitivity provides important insight into understanding this aspect of consumer behavior.

EQUITY SENSITIVITY

Adams' (1963) equity theory, a precursor of equity sensitivity, offers a fairly simplistic view of social exchange in which people: (a) tend to seek equitable relationships; (b) compare their own outcomes and inputs to the perceived outcomes and inputs of others; (c) experience distress when they perceive themselves to be in a situation of inequity; and (d) attempt to restore equity in those situations. According to this theory, people share a universal preference that their outcome/input ratio be equal to that of a comparison other. The distress experienced in inequity situations occurs regardless of whether the inequity results from being over-rewarded (the individual's outcomes are higher in relation to inputs than the comparison other's) or under-rewarded (the individual's outcomes are lower in relation to inputs than the comparison other's). Adams (1965) also noted that if the magnitude of inequity is the same for both the over-reward and under-reward situations, the felt distress will be greater in the under-reward situation.

Building on studies suggesting that individuals differ in their assessment of what constitutes inequity (e.g., Carroll & Dittrich, 1978; Tornow, 1971), Huseman, Hatfield, and Miles (1985, 1987) developed the concept of *equity sensitivity* as a more complex way of explaining the dynamics of equity perceptions. Equity sensitivity addresses varying perceptions of inequity among individuals by positing that individuals vary in their preferences when comparing their own outcome/input ratios to those of referent others.

As originally set forth by Huseman et al. (1985, 1987), equity sensitivity identified three equity preferences. First, *equity sensitives* exhibit classic equity theory preferences. They seek equity in their own outcomes and inputs, and prefer net outcomes equal to those of referent others. Second, *entitleds* prefer that their outcomes exceed their inputs. They prefer to get more from a relationship than they give to it, and that their net outcomes are greater than those of referent others. Third, *benevolents*, conceptually opposite from entitleds, prefer to have their inputs exceed their outcomes. They prefer to give more to a relationship than they get from it, and that their own outcome/input ratios are less than those of comparison others (i.e., their net outcome is less than that of referent others).

Researchers have used equity theory to illuminate a number of marketing issues, such as consumer expectations of service (Clow, Kurtz, and Ozment, 1998), business-to-business marketing (Patterson, Johnson, and Spreng, 1997; Boyd and Bhat 1998), customer complaints (Lapidus and Pinkerton, 1995), fairness in

pricing (Martins and Monroe, 1994), satisfaction with merchants and products (Oliver and Swan, 1989), and buyer-seller exchange (Huppertz, Arenson, and Evans, 1978). We believe equity sensitivity offers an expanded framework beyond that of equity theory in which to understand relationships in marketing; however, to date we have found no applications of equity sensitivity in marketing research. Our purpose in conducting this study is two-fold: first, to introduce equity sensitivity as a means of explaining customer satisfaction in a dynamic pricing environment; and second, to examine perceptions of fairness in Internet pricing.

EQUITY SENSITIVITY AND PRICE

Based on earlier studies discussed and on equity theory, we believe that consumers take into account the price paid by others when evaluating their satisfaction with the transaction.

H1: Consumers will indicate higher levels of satisfaction when they get a better deal (pay less) relative to a comparison other than they will when they get the worse deal (pay more), even though the price paid is less than a published price for the item.

Carrell and Dittrich (1978) identified a number of general, internal individual factors, such as social and religious values, intelligence, and gender that influence equity perceptions. In the case of online transactions, we believe that consumers' familiarity with the Internet will moderate their evaluations of the transaction. If a consumer gets a worse deal he may attribute it to his lower Internet skills and as such may evidence less dissatisfaction than someone who gets a worse deal but who believes he has strong Internet skills. We would expect those with greater Internet familiarity are likely to have higher expectations regarding their own ability to find the better deal when purchasing online. Therefore:

- H2a: On a worse deal, those who have greater familiarity with the Internet will be less satisfied with the transaction.
H2b: On a better deal, those who have less familiarity with the Internet will be more satisfied with the transaction.

There is also evidence of external factors that influence equity perceptions. Huppertz et al. (1978) found that perceptions of inequity were greater for high cost items than for low cost items. That is, in situations where the prices of both a high cost item and a low cost item were substantially more than expected, individuals' perceptions of inequity were significantly stronger for the high cost item than for the low cost item.

Inequity magnitude may be another related external factor. We noted earlier that the reactions of parties in an inequitable exchange are proportional to the magnitude of the inequity perceived (Adams, 1965). In other words, a greater perceived difference in compared inputs/outcomes should result in stronger feelings of distress or guilt than does a lesser perceived difference. Also, as previously stated, the intensity of the distress felt by the disadvantaged party (i.e., the one who got the worse deal) should be greater than the intensity of the guilt felt by the advantaged party (the one who got the better deal). Thus we expect that:

- H3a: Consumers' evaluations of the transaction will be more negative if they paid more for the airline ticket (\$150 price difference from comparison other) than if they paid more for the book (\$10 price difference).
H3b: Consumers' evaluations of the transaction will be more positive if they paid less for the airline ticket (\$150

difference) than if they paid less for the book (\$10 difference).

Equity Sensitives

These reactions illustrate classical equity theory responses to situations of inequity and, as such, should be typical of equity sensitives. If equity sensitives do not pay the same price for a product or service as does a comparison other, we can expect their satisfaction level to decrease as price magnitude increases. In addition, even though they prefer situations of equity, because the inequity of a given situation will produce more intense reactions for the disadvantaged party than for the advantaged party, we can expect equity sensitives to experience higher levels of satisfaction (i.e., a less negative reaction) when advantaged than when disadvantaged. However, because individuals differ in their sensitivity to inequity, we should expect the reactions of entitleds and benevolents to differ from each other and from those of equity sensitives in important ways. Unfortunately, very little empirical work has been done in this area to date.

Entitleds

Huseman et al. (1987:225) described entitleds as persons for whom "distress would occur if they were not 'getting a better deal' than their comparison other." In other words, they want to get more for their money than their comparison other got, or to pay less for the same product or service than did their comparison other. If price magnitude is also a factor, as we propose it is, then these preferences should be stronger for high cost items than for low cost items, or when their advantage in percentage of price difference is larger.

Benevolents

Conceptually opposite from entitleds in their preferences, benevolents are typically more satisfied with situations in which they give more to a relationship than they get from it, and when their own net outcome is less than a comparison other's net outcome. Considering price magnitude as a factor, benevolents' reactions may exhibit a similar intensity to that of entitleds in that their preferences should also be stronger for high cost items than for low cost items, and for larger percentage of price differences, as we hypothesized above. Consequently, we suggest equity sensitivity will influence consumers' response to a better or worse deal relative to a comparison other. Specifically:

- H4a: On a better deal, those with the highest level of entitlement will be most positive in their evaluations of the transaction.
H4b: On a worse deal, those with the highest level of entitlement will be most negative in their evaluations of the transaction.

METHOD

This study used a 2 (product- airplane ticket or book) x 2 (price-paid more or paid less) between subjects experimental design. The products were chosen because each has a fairly lengthy and significant history of online sales. We developed four scenarios that described various on-line purchase transactions followed by an encounter with another purchaser of the identical item. The four scenarios described: 1) a high-cost item (airplane ticket) that the respondent paid more for than the other purchaser (\$300 vs. \$150); 2) a high-cost item (airplane ticket) that the respondent paid less for than the other purchaser (\$150 vs. \$300); 3) a low-cost item (book) that the respondent paid more for than the other purchaser (\$25 vs. \$15); and 4) a low-cost item (book) that the respondent paid less for

TABLE 1
Purchase Evaluations

The (book/ticket) was a good value for the money
I am satisfied with the price I paid
The price I paid was good given time I spent searching online
The online (book/travel) industry sites are fair in their pricing
The Internet allows me to find the best price
What I paid was a fair price
Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$

than the other purchaser (\$15 vs. \$25). In all scenarios the price paid by the respondent was less than a published price for the item. Each respondent received only one of the four scenarios.

Subjects were given a scenario to read and were asked to complete a questionnaire. The survey asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with the transaction, their perception of fairness regarding the price they paid, and their evaluation of the value/risk of purchasing online. Because this is a study of online pricing judgments, we also included nine items to measure respondents' experience and familiarity with the Internet. Equity sensitivity was measured using the Equity Sensitivity Instrument (ESI) developed by Huseman et al. (1985, 1987).

A pilot study with 60 undergraduate and graduate management students had the respondents read the scenario and complete a short survey. After students completed the survey, we solicited their comments on the scenarios and the survey questions. Based on this feedback, we made minor modifications to the survey and to the scenarios.

The actual study consisted of two separate sampling plans. First, students in a large Southern state university were contacted during a business class and asked to participate. The 351 (186 male, 163 female, 2 did not indicate gender) students who chose to participate received one of the four scenarios, randomly distributed, along with the survey items, which they read and completed during class.

Second, as part of a project in a marketing research class, students were asked to recruit a non-student sample to complete the survey. Each student was asked to recruit ten respondents who met the following qualifications: at least 25 years old, non-students, and a balance of men and women. Again, the participants each received one of the four scenarios, randomly distributed, along with the survey items, which they completed and returned to the marketing research students. In addition, the non-student respondents were asked to provide a contact number for follow-up verification. We contacted about 20 percent of the respondents to verify participation and that the proper procedure was followed. Additionally, the marketing research students were required to read and sign an acknowledgement of the following statement: "I have read the above information, followed the guidelines for administering the survey and to the best of my ability completed this process in line with established professional research procedures. All of the surveys represent the opinions of the participants. I have not in any way unduly influenced their participation or responses." Of the 201 respondents, 95 were male and 106 were female.

RESULTS

The student sample did not differ significantly from the sample of the general public on any measure; therefore, the results reported represent the combined sample. Eight items were developed to measure consumers' evaluation of their purchase. These eight items were subjected to a reliability analysis that showed a Cronbach's alpha of .76. While this is sufficient for an initial scale, further examination revealed two items that had very low (below .30) item-to-total correlations. Removing these two items ("The other person probably spent more time searching online than I did" and "The deal I got was not worth the risk of buying online") resulted in a substantially improved Cronbach's alpha of .90. Table 1 shows the items that were summed to get a measure of Purchase Evaluation for further analysis.

We had hypothesized that the respondent's perception of his skill at using the Internet would impact satisfaction with the deal he got. As shown in Table 2, the nine items measuring Internet aptitude generated a Cronbach's alpha reliability rating of .81. These items were summed for each respondent to create a new variable, Internet Skill.

An analysis of variance was run with "Purchase Evaluation" as the dependent variable, product (airline ticket/book), price paid (more/less), Internet skill (low/high), and Equity Sensitivity (entitled/equity sensitive/benevolent) as factors. The design is unbalanced since each cell in the model does not contain the same number of cases.

Both product and price had significant main effects ($p = .000$) as well as two-way interaction effects ($p = .000$). Figure 1 shows respondents were more favorable in their price evaluations when they paid less for the product than a comparison other than they were when they paid more, supporting Hypothesis 1. When the price paid was higher than a comparison other, the size of the price difference was significant, with price satisfaction for the book (\$10 price difference, 1.67 times higher than other price) higher than for the airline ticket (\$150 price difference, 2 times higher), thus supporting H3a. However, there was no significant difference between products when the price paid was lower, failing to support Hypothesis 3b. Future research might investigate whether this satisfaction difference would hold if the absolute value were greater but the relative difference were less (for example if the ticket had been \$50 higher or 1.34 times the comparison other, while the book was \$10 higher or 1.67 times the comparison other). As seen in Table 3, the Equity Sensitivity Index was not a significant covariant with satisfaction, failing to support Hypotheses 4a and 4b. Internet

TABLE 2
Internet Skill

I enjoy using the Internet.
I am not at all familiar with the Internet (R)
Others ask me how to find things online.
It takes me longer to find things online than it does my friends. (R)
I am often frustrated in attempting to navigate the Internet. (R)
I only visit the same few sites anytime I am online. (R)
I am confident purchasing items online.
I find the Internet very useful in finding information I need.
When looking for a product online, I usually visit several sites.
Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$

(R) Indicates item was reverse-scored.

skill did have a significant main effect on satisfaction; however, correlations between satisfaction and Internet skill were positive regardless of whether the respondent got a better or worse deal. This was counter to hypotheses 2a and b. Although the main effects for price, product and Internet skill were statistically significant, the effect size for product and Internet skill were relatively small, with the partial Eta squared showing each accounted for less than 4% of the overall (effect + error) variance.

DISCUSSION

Consistent with earlier studies and with equity theory, this study demonstrates that consumer satisfaction with a transaction is impacted by knowledge of the price others paid for the same product. Participants who got a better deal than a comparative other rated their satisfaction higher than those who got a worse deal. When getting a better deal, the magnitude of the difference did not seem to matter, but when the deal was worse satisfaction for the higher priced item with \$150 difference (airline ticket) was lower than for the lower priced item with a \$10 difference (book). Since both the absolute and relative value of the differences was higher for the airline ticket, we don't know if the dissatisfaction was driven more by the absolute value of the difference or by the relative value of the difference. Future research is needed to explore the threshold of impact in comparing prices with others.

As the Internet facilitates dynamic pricing and companies have more opportunities for finely targeted pricing they must recognize that consumers have greater access to quick price comparisons online. While pre-purchase comparisons may guide consumer choice (as companies have known for years), post-purchase comparisons may impact consumers' satisfaction. Companies cannot control the word-of-mouth comparisons of prices, nor the accessibility of price comparisons on others' web sites; however, a company with consistently low prices may want to consider providing price comparisons on their web site to highlight the price advantage over the competition and reinforce consumers' choices. Furthermore, companies must recognize that segmented pricing has the potential to lead to dissatisfied consumers.

Counter to our expectations, the Equity Sensitivity Instrument did not provide any significant predictive power for price satisfaction. A possible explanation for this result is that the artificiality of scenarios failed to completely engage participants' emotions and may have resulted in evaluations that differ from what they would be in real life situations.

It is reassuring to note that the evaluations of the transaction did not vary between the student sample and the sample of the general public. Academic researchers are often torn by the conflicting goals of conducting research in a timely and cost effective manner (which can be most readily done using student samples) while ensuring that the research results are generalizable to the broader public (typically requiring a non-student sample). Yet this study suggests there may be occasions when results from a student sample may not differ significantly from results from a non-student sample.

While Internet skill showed statistically significant main and interaction effects on participant satisfaction with price, from a practical point of view the impact was minimal as shown by the low partial Eta squared values.

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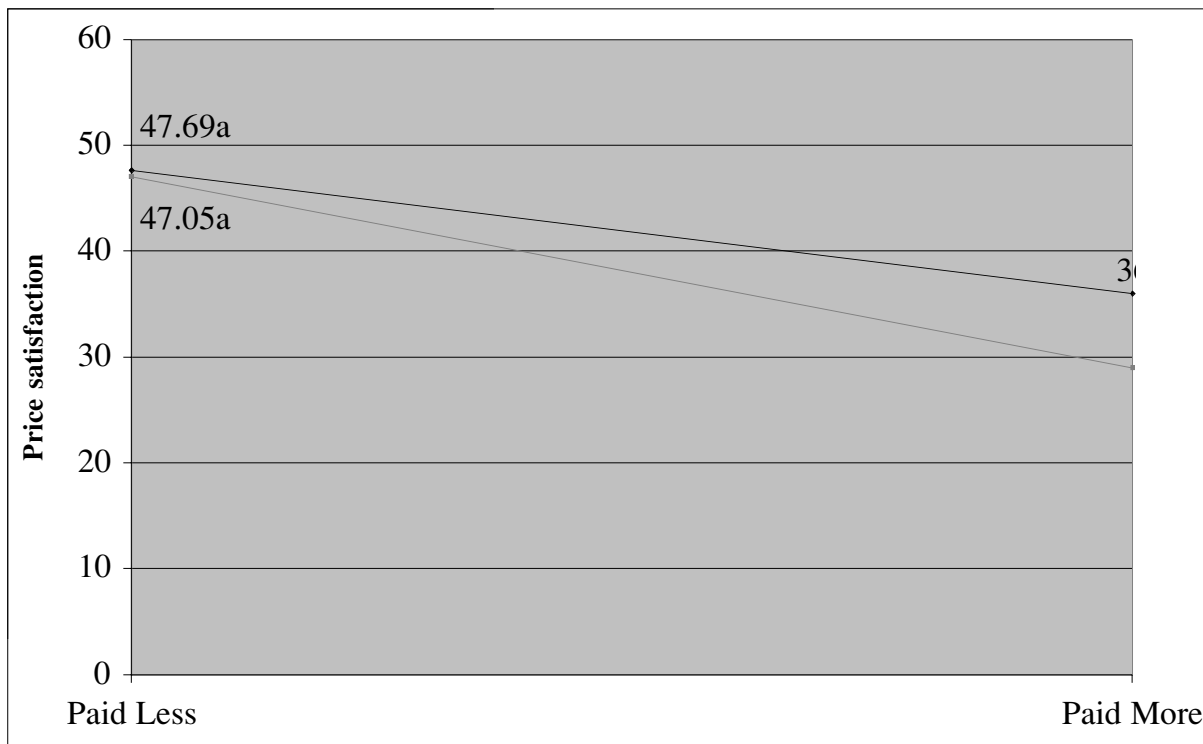
TABLE 3
Results of Analysis of Variance

	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Main Effects			
Product	20.128	.000	.037
Price	294.662	.000	.359
Equity Sensitivity	1.142	.320	.004
Internet Skill	17.841	.000	.033
2-Way Interactions			
Product x Price	13.823	.000	.026
Product x Equity Sensitivity	.509	.601	.002
Price x Equity Sensitivity	1.352	.260	.005
Product x Internet Skill	6.181	.013	.012
Price x Internet Skill	.052	.819	.000
Equity Sensitivity x Internet Skill	.266	.766	.001
3-Way Interaction			
Product x Price x Equity Sensitivity	.637	.529	.002
Product x Price x Internet Skill	6.044	.014	.011
Product x Equity Sensitivity x Internet Skill	.009	.991	.000
Price x Equity Sensitivity x Internet Skill	1.250	.287	.005
4-Way Interaction			
Product x Price x Equity Sensitivity x Internet Skill	1.627	.197	.006
R Squared=.424 (Adjusted=.399)			

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FIGURE 1
2-Way Interaction Effect of Relative Price Paid and Product on Price Satisfaction
Means labeled with different letters are significantly different at $p < .000$



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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Automatic Effects: The Consequences of Construct Accessibility for Behavior, Self-regulation, and Information Processing

S. Christian Wheeler, Stanford University

SESSION OVERVIEW

A rapidly burgeoning body of research indicates that the activation of constructs such as traits, stereotypes, and goals can affect subsequent judgment and behavior (see Dijksterhuis and Bargh 2001; Wheeler and Petty 2001, for reviews). For example, individuals primed with the elderly stereotype subsequently walk more slowly, consistent with the stereotype that elderly individuals are slow (Bargh, Chen, and Burrows 1996). Similarly, individuals primed with the African-American stereotype subsequently perform more poorly on a standardized math test, consistent with the stereotype of Black academic underperformance (Wheeler, Jarvis, and Petty 1999). The papers in this session examined automatic processes in consumer behavior contexts and provided evidence for strong automatic components in the direction and instigation of behavior. This research supports the notion that both chronic and situational sources of activation can lead to automatic behavioral change, and that automatic behavior can potentially be driven by multiple different mechanisms.

The first paper, by Fitzsimons, Chartrand, and Fitzsimons, demonstrated that anthropomorphized objects like animals and brands can nonconsciously shape behavior in ways consistent with the traits associated with the objects. Across the three studies, the authors provided evidence that anthropomorphized objects can activate traits much like stereotyped individuals can, and once these traits are activated, they can influence behavior automatically. The third study used a delay paradigm to show that the resulting behavior was driven by automatically activated goal components that have increasing effects over time.

The second paper, by Ramanathan and Menon, decomposed the automatic and controlled components of impulsive and prudent behavior across individuals who have the goals chronically or situationally accessible. This research suggests that both impulsivity and prudence can be automatically directed, but that the strength of these automatic motivations may differ. The automatic prudence goals of non-impulsive people are considerably stronger than their conscious indulgence goals, whereas the automatic indulgence goals of impulsive people are stronger than conscious control goals, but much less so. The authors suggested that these patterns are due to the relative frequency of goal activation and behavior.

The third paper, by Wheeler, DeMarree, and Petty, provided evidence that primed traits and stereotypes can influence information processing as though they were self-descriptive. Using a schema-matching persuasion paradigm, they demonstrated that individuals engaged in greater elaboration of messages matching primed traits and stereotypes, much as has been shown for chronically held, self-endorsed schemata. A second study showed that the effect was larger among low self-monitors, consistent with the notion that effects were driven by changes in the active self-concept.

The discussion was led by Chris Janiszewski, who highlighted similarities and differences across the papers and provided insightful directions for future research.

LONG ABSTRACTS

“Automatic Effects of Exposure to Anthropomorphized Objects on Behavior”

Gráinne M. Fitzsimons, New York University

Tanya L. Chartrand, Ohio State University

Gavan J. Fitzsimons, University of Pennsylvania

The social environment can automatically activate in individuals goals and motives, emotions and mood, evaluations, cognitions, judgments, relational schemas, and stereotypes. These constructs can in turn influence behavior outside of an individual's awareness, intent, and control. Thus, the automatic influence of the environment on behavior can be mediated by many different motivational, cognitive, and affective constructs. The present research focuses on the route involving automatic stereotype activation.

In particular, research has shown that the presence of an individual from a stereotyped group can automatically activate the corresponding stereotype (Devine 1989). This in turn leads the perceiver to behave in a stereotype-consistent fashion (Dijksterhuis and Bargh 2001). In the laboratory, researchers subliminally or supraliminally prime (i.e., activate outside of awareness) an individual with a stereotype (e.g., African-Americans), and then show the primed individual to behave in line with the content of that stereotype (e.g., act hostilely).

Thus far, research has centered on stereotypes dealing with human beings—racial, gender, and other group-based stereotypes. But we also have stereotypes concerning anthropomorphized objects (Aaker 1997). Can these stereotypes also become automatically activated and then guide behavior? The current research used a priming methodology to determine whether exposure to anthropomorphized objects can nonconsciously guide behavior.

In a first study, we examined one type of anthropomorphized object that is near and dear to many people's hearts: pets. We first conducted a pilot study in which we asked participants what the stereotype they had of cats and dogs was. Results indicated that dogs are stereotyped as being 'loyal' much more than cats. We therefore hypothesized that people primed with dogs would behave more loyally than would people primed with cats.

To test this hypothesis, participants were supraliminally primed with photographs of either cats, dogs, or neutral objects. Participants then completed a loyalty measure, consisting of scenarios describing friends' transgressions, and questions about how loyally participants would respond. As predicted, participants primed with dogs responded more loyally to friends' transgressions than did control participants or cat-primed participants.

In a second study, we examined another type of anthropomorphized object: brand names. Individuals often attribute human-like qualities to brand names (Aaker 1997). We focused on a brand that had a strong stereotype associated with it. Specifically, the brand 'Apple' has been shown to connote creativity more than does the brand 'IBM' (Aaker 1997). We therefore hypothesized that people primed with Apple logos would perform more creatively than would people primed with IBM logos.

Participants were subliminally primed with either Apple logos, IBM logos, or pattern masks while completing a computerized

vigilance task. All participants then completed a creativity task—the ‘Unusual Uses Task’, in which they were asked to generate as many unusual uses as possible for a brick. Trained coders rated the uses for their creativity. Dependent measures included the total number of uses generated and creativity ratings.

As predicted, Apple-primed participants outperformed control and IBM-primed participants on the creativity task: Apple-primed participants generated more uses overall and received higher creativity ratings than did control or IBM-primed participants. Participants did not differ on self-reported motivation or interest in the task, suggesting that the effects of the brand logos on behavior were nonconscious. Importantly, participants also reported no awareness of the primes.

We conducted a third study to examine whether the stereotype influenced behavior in a nonconscious, direct stereotype-behavior fashion, or whether there was a motivational component involved. Did individuals primed with the Apple logo want to be more creative? Perceptual priming effects are known to diminish in strength after a short delay. In contrast, motivational priming effects continue—and even increase—after a delay (Bargh et al. 2001).

Thus, a follow-up study replicated Study 2 and also examined the results after a 5-minute delay between the prime and the creativity measure. Students attending two separate lectures were subliminally primed with either Apple or IBM logos while allegedly doing a computerized vigilance task projected at the front of the lecture hall. Half of participants completed the Unusual Uses Task immediately; half did so after a 5-min delay.

The pattern of data for the No Delay condition replicated the findings of Study 2: Apple-primed participants were more creative than IBM-primed. In the Delay condition, Apple-primed participants became significantly more creative than they were in the No Delay condition. As suggested by Bargh et al. (2001), priming effects that increase over time may be motivational—rather than perceptual—in nature.

These studies use priming procedures to demonstrate that perceiving anthropomorphized objects can elicit automatic stereotype-behavior effects in the same fashion as does perceiving humans. In addition, there appears to be a motivational component involved, such that individuals, upon being primed, take on a goal to act in a stereotype-consistent fashion.

“Decomposing Automatic and Conscious Components of Self-Control and Indulgence”

*Suresh Ramanathan University of Chicago
Geeta Menon, New York University*

Studies on self-control and impulsive behavior have long debated the extent to which impulsive behavior is driven by spontaneous affective or goal-driven processes (e.g., Rook 1987; Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999, 2002; Ramanathan and Menon 2002). Many studies have argued that impulsive behavior is characterized by the simultaneous experience of spontaneous desire and will-power (e.g., Hoch and Loewenstein 1991). Implicit in this notion is that only urges are automatic while self-control is a conscious process. Recent work by Fishbach, Friedman and Kruglanski (2002) suggests that temptations are capable of activating higher-order self-control goals automatically. Fishbach (2003) goes on to argue that self-control goals may be chronically accessible and hence the idea that will-power is conscious may not necessarily hold true.

Recognizing that any behavior is likely to have both conscious and non-conscious components, we propose a Process Decomposition Model based on the work by Jacoby (1991) and Fitzsimons and

Williams (2000). We disentangle the extent to which impulsive behavior is determined by automatic hedonic goals among impulsives and as a corollary, the extent to which prudent behavior is determined by automatic prudence goals among non-impulsives. Our model assumes that impulsive people engage in indulgences on the basis of some combination of automatic and conscious processes. Similarly, we assume that non-impulsive people choose to be prudent as a result of both automatic and conscious processes. Based on the theory of the PDP model, we enhance or diminish the conscious components by priming people with the consonant or the dissonant goal. Thus, impulsive people might experience a magnification of a hedonic urge when they are primed with the hedonic goal while they may experience a diminution of the conscious hedonic urge when they are primed with the opposite prudence goal. Similarly, non-impulsives were primed with a hedonic goal in order to reduce their conscious component of control while they were primed with the prudence goal in order to magnify the conscious component of control. In addition, respondents were placed either under high or low cognitive load. The load conditions were fully crossed with the priming conditions. Subsequent to the priming/load manipulation, respondents were taken to a second room where they were left alone for two minutes with a tray filled with cookies with a cover story that these cookies were from a departmental meeting that ended just a few minutes ago. Unknown to the respondents, a hidden video camera recorded whether they picked up a cookie or not. The dependent measure was the percent of people who picked up (or did not pick up) a cookie.

Based on the process decomposition procedure, one can construct a set of four equations for the four conditions such that a) the conscious component is either magnified or reduced and b) the same occurs either under full cognitive resources or under diminished resources. These equations are constructed separately for impulsive and non-impulsive people. By solving these equations, we can determine the relation between the conscious and automatic components of behavior. Our results show that while the automatic urge to indulge oneself is about two and a half times as strong as the conscious control component for impulsive people, the automatic urge to exercise control is about seven times as strong as the conscious urge to indulge oneself for non-impulsive people.

We conclude that non-impulsive people have a stronger automatic element of self-control because their pattern of exercising control is more reliable and frequent. Their likelihood of succumbing to temptation is less likely due to the fact that they probably hold a stronger motive to be prudent. On the other hand, impulsive people have a relatively weak automatic element of indulgence because their behavior is not as reliably and frequently engaged in—the notion that there is some fight between desire and will-power indicates that there may be times when the latter wins out, hence reducing the reliability of the behavior.

“The Role of the Self in Prime-to-Behavior Effects”

*S. Christian Wheeler, Stanford University
Kenneth G. DeMarree, Ohio State University
Richard E. Petty, Ohio State University*

Research on prime-to-behavior effects has shown that the situational activation of selected mental contents can reliably influence judgment and behavior. Typically, these effects occur in an assimilative direction, although contrast occasionally occurs (Dijksterhuis et al. 1998). That is, individuals in whom a trait or stereotype is made salient typically behave more similar to the stereotype. For example, college participants walk more slowly when primed with an elderly stereotype (Bargh, Chen, and Burrows 1996). One account for these effects is ideomotor activation (Car-

penter 1874; James 1890/1950). According to this account, ideation is sufficient to drive action in the absence of will. When behavioral and procedural constructs become active, either by direct activation or indirect activation (e.g., via trait activation), they can automatically shape action. However, more recently, evidence has suggested that processes related to the self and self-concept may also sometimes play a role (Hull et al. 2002; Wheeler, Jarvis, and Petty 2001; Wheeler and Petty 2001). Based on this evidence, Wheeler and Petty (2001) suggested that stereotype activation effects may sometimes be due to temporarily activating or including content in the working self-concept.

If this is the case, individuals who are primed with a stereotype or trait construct should act as though the prime were part of the self. That is, their judgments and behaviors should resemble those individuals who embody the traits and stereotypes included in the prime. Additionally, however, the effects of the prime should depend on the extent to which individuals rely on their self-characteristics and beliefs to guide behavior. More specifically, self-monitoring is a variable that predicts the extent to which individuals rely on inward cues or outward cues in determining their behavior in a situation (Snyder 1974). The Other-Directedness Subscale of the self-monitoring scale specifically predicts the desire of individuals to modify their behavior to best interact with others in the social environment.

Because low self-monitors' behavior is more consistent with their internal states, they might show high levels of assimilation to the activated prime. Because high self-monitors direct their attention outward and compare themselves more with others, they might show reduced or even reversed effects of the prime. These effects should be particularly pronounced among individuals scoring high or low on the other-directedness subscale of the self-monitoring scale.

To test these hypotheses, we used a self-schema matching paradigm. Research on self-schema matching has shown that individuals who receive persuasive messages matched to an aspect of their self-concepts engage in greater message elaboration than individuals who receive persuasive messages mismatched to their self-concepts (Petty, Wheeler, and Bizer 2000; Wheeler, Petty and Bizer forthcoming). If individuals incorporate primed content into their self-concepts, then they could show increased elaboration in response to messages matching the primed content. The first experiment tested this hypothesis.

Individuals were subtly primed with extraversion or introversion using a sentence-unscrambling task (Srull and Wyer 1979). Following the priming manipulation, they read advertisements for a VCR framed to match introverts or extraverts. Manipulated orthogonally to the message frame was argument quality such that some participants read strong arguments, whereas other participants read weak arguments. Individuals who engage in greater message elaboration exhibit stronger argument quality effects than do individuals who engage in less message elaboration (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Results indicated that participants engaged in greater elaboration of the message when the message frame matched the primed personality trait (i.e., extraversion or introversion) than when it mismatched the primed personality trait. Hence, participants processed the advertisement as though it were self-relevant when it matched the primed trait.

A second experiment tested whether these effects would be moderated by self-monitoring. In this experiment, white high and low self-monitors were subtly primed with the African-American stereotype or not, using a sentence unscrambling task. They then read an advertisement for a CD player that contained strong or weak arguments. Additionally, the message was framed to match African-Americans or Whites by providing names of rap and R&B

artists or rock artists in the background of the advertisement. Low self-monitors assimilated to the prime. That is, low self-monitors engaged in greater message processing of the African-American framed ad when they had been primed with the African-American stereotype. When low self-monitors were primed with neutral words, they engaged in greater message processing of the White-framed ad. High self-monitors, on the other hand, showed no significant effect of the prime, although they exhibited a slight tendency for contrast in the African-American prime condition.

These results show that primed traits and stereotypes can influence the elaboration and evaluation of persuasive advertisements in prime-consistent ways. That is, individuals in whom traits or stereotypes are temporarily made active act as though they are characterized by the primed content and find the information matching the primed content important and self-relevant. These findings are consistent with the notion that primed content is sometimes incorporated into the self-concept and that the effects of primed material will depend not only on the prime content, but also the characteristics of the prime recipient.

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ROUNDTABLE

Olfactory Stimulation and Affect Intensity: Gender Differences in Yielding to the Enticing Aroma of Food?

David J. Moore, University of Michigan

In spite of the competent marketing research already conducted in the area of olfaction (Sprangenberg, et al. 1996; Mitchell, Kahn and Knasko 1995), very little formal research has examined how consumers are influenced when exposed to the aroma of enticing food in a retail service environment (e.g., restaurants). Companies employ a variety of strategies to exploit the sensory arousal capabilities of the savory aroma of food products. According to Krause (1998), the aroma of savory foods is an underutilized marketing tool in the restaurant industry, and restaurants should realize that many foods “impart seductive aromas that entice consumers even before they taste the dish” (Krause 1998, p.2).

Several important questions about the role of olfaction in marketing are yet to be explored. For example:

(a) Does the exposure to an enticing food aroma stimulate an affective response (e.g., desire and craving), which, in turn, stimulates an irresistible desire to consume the product?

(b) What is the role of affect in this process? Most of the research in psychology has focused on the role of the olfactory system in human memory and cognition (Richardson and Zucco 1989; Schab 1991). Other studies have examined how pleasant and unpleasant odors create affective experiences which ultimately function as mechanisms for the retrieval of happy and unhappy memories (Ehrlichman and Halpern 1988). However, what is still not known is the manner in which an olfactory stimulus itself produces a sensory arousal, creates affect, which, in turn, may intensify the consumer’s craving and desire to consume savory foods.

(c) Do individuals differ in the intensity of their response to olfactory sensations? If olfaction stimulates affect, then consumers who manifest high levels of affect intensity in response to olfactory stimulations may indeed show stronger levels of craving and desire when faced with an enticing food temptation. Affect intensity measures the strength with which people respond to emotionally charged stimuli (Larsen 1984). One of the temperamental dimensions of affect intensity is *sensory arousability*– which identifies individuals who are overly sensitive to sensory stimulation such as olfaction. Moore and Homer (2000) tested this notion and found that high affect intensity consumers expressed a significantly higher level of enjoyment for smelling the aroma of freshly baked bread and the fragrance of perfumes.

(d) Is there a gender difference in consumers’ response to olfactory stimulation? Women manifest more intense levels of emotion than men when exposed to emotionally charged stimuli (Diener et al. 1985). Will women respond differently from men when exposed to certain types of olfactory stimulations?

The results of a preliminary study conducted to respond to the research questions listed above was the focus of discussion at the ROUND TABLE. Essentially, this study found that:

- (a) Exposure to olfactory stimulation (the aroma of cinnamon rolls at a Cinnamon store in a local mall) did create significant increases in craving and desire
- (b) Women reported higher intensities of craving for snacks than their male counterparts
- (c) Women experienced high intensities of craving and desire to eat only when exposed to the olfactory stimulation (aroma of cinnamon rolls).
- (d) High Affect Intensity subjects expressed higher levels of craving and desire than their low intensity counterparts.
- (e) Women showed lower levels of ability to resist an eating temptation when the situation was associated with one’s emotions.
- (f) The segment of the affect intensity individuals who were most highly associated with intense craving for snacks (e.g. brownies) was the group who experienced higher levels of negative affect intensity.
- (g) The data seemed to indicate that women were less likely to resist an eating temptation for snacks than their male counterparts. This is also consistent with recent data from the Snack Food Association (SFA) USA.
- (h) Public policy implications: The rise in the frequency of snacking among consumers may be linked to recent increases in life threatening diseases.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Advances in the Psychology of Consumer Investment

Rongrong Zhou, HKUST
Michel Tuan Pham, Columbia University

SESSION OVERVIEW

Consumers make important investment decisions throughout their lives. While such decisions were once thought the exclusive province of finance and economics, they also deserve great attention from consumer researchers. First, consumption is intimately related to wealth: consumption requires money, and money is for consumption. No theory of consumption can be complete without an understanding of how consumers manage their wealth. Second, investment decisions typically entail substantial financial stakes and can have important influences on consumers' welfare. Finally, investment decisions are theoretically interesting in their own right. Although one might be tempted to regard them as a special kind of consumption decisions—decisions about financial products as opposed to traditional consumables—it is not clear that investment decisions respond to the same principles as those governing more traditional product decisions. However, despite their importance, surprisingly little consumer research has focused on such investment decisions.

This special session is an attempt to address this void. In the first presentation, Dhar and Kumar (see Dhar and Kumar 2004) analyze individual-level trading data from a brokerage house to investigate how investors' decisions to buy and sell stocks are influenced by short-term past price trends. They used Monte-Carlo simulation to classify individuals in their dataset as "momentum investors" (those who expect continuations of past price increase or decrease) or "contrarian investors" (those who expect reversals of trends). They observed that the two segments showed different responses to reference points such as recent highs and lows in stock prices. They also found that the two segments exhibited differences in term of the disposition effect—a well-established phenomenon whereby investors tend to realize gains too quickly but are reluctant to realize losses. Analyzing the differences in portfolio and trading characteristics of the two segments, they additionally found that momentum investors held less diversified and riskier portfolios and traded more actively than contrarian investors do. They concluded that, overall, contrarian investors appear to be relatively more sophisticated.

In the second presentation, Zhou and Pham examined consumers' investment decisions across different types of financial products from a self-regulation perspective. They argued that investment decisions are largely driven by regulatory systems known as promotion and prevention. Promotion and prevention-focused self-regulation, though both essential to successful investment management, tend to be pursued separately through distinct mental accounts. Furthermore, different financial products are posted to separate mental accounts set up around a promotion versus prevention focus. This in turn leads to systematic differences in the way consumers make decisions about these products. They reported results from four experiments showing that (a) investors are asymmetrically sensitive to potential gains versus potential losses across financial products; (b) investors are differentially risk-seeking with money mentally associated with different financial accounts; and more importantly (3) these effects occurred because investors categorize different financial products in terms of distinct self-regulatory focuses.

At the conclusion of the presentations, John Gourville led the discussion. Besides summarizing the papers and highlighting the

common learning, he put forward interesting questions and issues and offered suggestions on directions of future research in this area.

“Non-Random Walk Down the Main Street: Impact of Price Trends on Trading Decisions of Individual Investors”

Ravi Dhar, Yale University
Alok Kumar, Cornell University

Recent research has examined the systematic deviations from traditional models of rationality to better understand investor behavior in financial markets. Relatively little is known about the psychological motivations that determine decisions about buying and selling stocks for individual investors. In this paper, we analyze the impact of price trends on trading decisions of more than 40,000 households with accounts at a major discount brokerage house and find that buying and selling decisions of investors in our sample are influenced by short-term (less than 3 months) past price trends. Investors that trade on trends can be broadly classified as momentum (positive feedback traders) or contrarian (negative feedback traders). *Ceteris paribus*, momentum investors expect price continuations and hence they buy on an upward trend and sell on a downward trend. Contrarians, on the other hand, expect price reversals and thus they buy on a downward price trend and sell on an upward trend. By comparing the observed distributions of average trend before buys and average trend before sells with the average trend distributions (obtained using Monte Carlo simulations) when investors trade randomly, the null of non-trend motivated random trading is easily rejected (p -value <0.002). Using Monte Carlo simulations again, we examine investor heterogeneity in trading based on prior returns and classify investors into (i) momentum buy (MB), (ii) momentum sell (MS), (iii) contrarian buy (CB) or (iv) contrarian sell (CS) category. The trading behavior of these investor segments shows systematic differences that are persistent across time periods. We find variations in the response of these investor segments to reference points such as recent high and low prices for the traded stock.

Previous research suggests that investors may be reluctant to realize losses (disposition effect or DE) on their investments due to various psychological factors including mental accounting (reluctance to close a mental account at a loss) and regret aversion (reluctance to accept mistakes). The reluctance to realize losses can also result from different expectations about the future prices. Contrarian investors expect trend reversals and so the propensity to hold on to the losers is likely to be stronger for them. Momentum investors, on the other hand, are more likely to realize their losses since they believe that a downward price trend is likely to continue. This suggests that the disposition to hold on to a losing investment is likely to vary across investor segments due to the differences in their expectations about the future price movements. Consistent with differences in expectations, we find that the disposition effect varies across the investor segments. All four investor segments are reluctant to sell losers but the effect is the strongest for contrarian sell investors who expect price reversals and hence show a greater tendency to hold on to the losers. The effect is very weak for momentum sell investors who believe that a downward price trend is likely to continue and hence are more likely to realize their losses. The presence of DE even among momentum investors who expect trend continuation suggests that loss aversion is an important

determinant of disposition effect. However, the variation of DE across momentum and contrarian investor segments suggests that in addition to loss aversion, contrarian expectation is an important determinant of investors' reluctance to sell losers. Analyzing the differences in portfolio and trading characteristics of investor segments, we find that momentum investors hold less diversified and riskier portfolios and they trade more actively. Consequently, they earn lower risk-adjusted portfolio returns in comparison to the contrarian investor segment. The relatively stronger performance of contrarian investors can also be attributed to their "value" focus. Overall, our results suggest that relatively more sophisticated investors exhibit contrarian trading behavior.

"Financial Self-Regulation across Mental Accounts: Implications for Consumer Investment Decisions"

Rongrong Zhou, HKUST

Michel Tuan Pham, Columbia University

We propose that consumers' investment decisions can be usefully studied from a self-regulation perspective (e.g., Carver and Scheier 1998). In particular, consumers' investment decisions are largely driven by generic regulatory systems known as promotion and prevention (Higgins 1998). The promotion system regulates nurturance needs and those motives related to aspiration and accomplishment (i.e., ideals). The prevention system regulates security needs and those motives related to safety and responsibilities (i.e., oughts). Since promotion and prevention-oriented financial self-regulation is difficult to achieve simultaneously, investors tend to perform the two types of self-regulation using separate "mental accounts" (a promotion focus account and a prevention focus account). In addition, consumers post various financial products to these two accounts according to these products' representativeness to the motives and goals defining these accounts (see Brendl et al. 1998). Financial products such as individual stocks and trading accounts tend to be associated with a promotion focus, which emphasizes growth and aspirations. In contrast, financial products such as mutual funds and retirement accounts tend to be associated with a prevention focus, which emphasizes security and protection. This association in turn leads to systematic differences in the way consumers make decisions about these products.

A major correlate of promotion versus prevention is a differential sensitivity to positive versus negative outcomes. The promotion system tends to be more sensitive to positive outcomes (e.g., gains), and the prevention system tends to be more sensitive to negative outcomes (e.g., losses). Therefore, we predict that investment decisions involving financial products tagged with a prevention focus will exhibit a relatively greater sensitivity to potential losses than to potential gains. However, investment decisions involving products tagged with a promotion focus will exhibit a relatively greater sensitivity to potential gains than to potential losses. This prediction is tested in Experiment 1. Results from Experiment 1 reveal that consumer investors evaluating an individual stock held in a trading account were found to be very sensitive to upside potential, but curiously oblivious to downside potential. In contrast, investors evaluating a mutual fund held in a retirement account were found to be very sensitive to downside potential, but oddly insensitive to upside potential.

Another major correlate of promotion versus prevention self-regulation is a different propensity toward risk. In most situations, promotion-focused regulation entails greater risk-taking, whereas prevention-focused regulation entails greater risk aversion. Therefore, we argue that in decisions involving financial products tagged with a promotion focus, consumers should exhibit greater risk-seeking than in decisions involving financial products tagged with a prevention focus. We predict that this difference in risk propensity

will hold even for money that bears only a mental association with promotion versus prevention-focused financial products. In particular, we predict that money to be withdrawn from a prevention-tagged account will be invested more conservatively than money to be withdrawn from a promotion-tagged account. Furthermore, this effect will be amplified when consumers' self-regulation concerns are heightened. These predictions are tested in Experiment 2. Results reveal that respondents whose money was to be withdrawn from a trading account were much more willing to invest in a risky business venture than respondents whose money was to be withdrawn from a retirement account. These differences in risk propensities were accentuated when respondents were encouraged to reflect on their goals, that is, when their self-regulation systems were actively engaged.

Experiments 1 and 2 provided input-output evidence of a relation between certain financial products and investment behavior (in terms of sensitivity to gains and losses and risk propensity). Experiments 3 and 4 provide more process-level evidence that this relation could be due a mental association between certain financial products and distinct regulatory focuses. In experiment 3, it was found that making decisions involving different types of financial products resulted in subsequent unrelated decisions being carried out with distinctive promotion versus prevention orientations. Specifically, respondents who had made decisions about individual stocks in trading accounts were later found to prefer consumer products with promotion-related benefits and favor approach strategies in friendship. In contrast, respondents who had made decisions about mutual funds in retirement accounts were found to prefer products with prevention-related benefits and favor avoidance strategies in friendship. In experiment 4, it was found that the mere priming of a promotion versus prevention focus through tasks that have little to do with financial decision making produced distinct patterns of allocation of money across types of accounts and across types of assets. Specifically, when the unrelated tasks (proofreading and anagrams) were framed in terms of avoiding misses, thus priming a prevention focus, respondents' allocations tended to shift (a) toward the IRA (as opposed to the online trading account) and (b) toward the mutual fund (as opposed to the individual stock). In contrast, when the unrelated tasks were framed in terms of maximizing hits, thus priming a promotion focus, respondents' allocations tended to shift (a) toward the online trading account (as opposed to the IRA) and (b) toward the individual stock (as opposed to the mutual fund).

Taken together, the results show that (a) investors are asymmetrically sensitive to potential gains versus potential losses across financial products; (b) investors are differentially risk-seeking with money mentally associated with different financial accounts; and more importantly (3) these effects occur because investors associate different financial products with distinct self-regulatory focuses. Overall, the findings are consistent with the view that promotion and prevention self-regulation are pursued through separate mental accounts and that consumers post different financial products to these mental accounts set up around different regulatory focuses. As a result, decisions involving these products are carried out with a distinct promotion or prevention orientation.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Alternative Decision Processes in Consumption: Personal Rules, Rationales, and Identity Maintenance

On Amir, Yale University

SESSION OVERVIEW

Consumers make many decisions on a daily basis. The outcomes of these decisions have been traditionally taken to reflect consumers' internal states, or preferences. Furthermore, traditional view requires the consumer to attempt to provide an optimal solution for each decision problem. This session describes a different mechanism that drives consumer behavior in various situations. Specifically, consumers are assumed to sometimes follow overarching guidelines (rationales / rules) simply because of the complementarity between the decision problem and a specific guideline they hold. Moreover, consumers sometimes behave in this manner even when it is not in their best interests to do so. This behavior can be characterized by a discrepancy between preferences (expressed) and actions (or predicted actions).

The first paper by Hsee et al (2003) describes three important classes of rationales that are used by consumers to their own disadvantage. In all three cases, consumers focus too much on rationalistic attributes and too little on hedonic attributes because they try to be rational, even when the latter are more discriminatory for their subsequent happiness. Consumers' attempts at acting in a rational way are classified into three categories: In the first, "lay economism," consumers are using economic-like principles (e.g. "maximize economic gains") that are invoked because of the economic nature of the decision problems to make decisions. In the second, "lay scientism," consumers overemphasize objective attributes over affective-subjective ones. Finally, in the third, "lay functionalism," consumers over focus on their primary goal. The paper argues that when following such rationales, consumers may over emphasize unimportant and sometimes wrong attributes of the situation, and thus make suboptimal outcomes.

The second paper by Amir and Ariely takes one such consumption rule and investigates the mechanism by which it operates. Specifically, it is demonstrated that people are not willing to pay more in order to delay a positive experience, even in those particular situations in which they would be happier doing so. Moreover, the more salient the invoking cues for this rationale, or the more salient lawful behavior is, the greater the discrepancy between peoples' preferences and their actions. Finally, the specific reason this rule is invoked, the thought about monetary payment, is demonstrated by showing that willingness to exert effort as opposed to willingness to pay does in fact correspond to expressed preferences.

The third paper by Prelec proposes a model of personal rules. The model assumes that in the presence of a personal rule, a choice becomes a signal of a long-run propensity to behave in a certain way (e.g., to spend money on luxuries, to neglect family life in favor of work, etc.). This raises the stakes on any single decision, because by breaking the rule, a person also lowers their expectations of future adherence to the rule. The paper also explains why rules are in some sense 'designed to be broken,' but not too often.

In sum, this emerging body of research uncovers important mechanisms that guide decision makers in many consumption occasions. These mechanisms suggest that many times consumers behave according to lay principles that stem from experience in other domains, or from cultural or social antecedents. Understanding these processes, where and when they dominate behavior aids in identifying and in understanding situations in which consumers err or behave in specific, previously unpredictable ways.

"Hot Predictions and Cold Choices: Rationalism in Decision Making"

Christopher K. Hsee, Jiao Zhang and Fang Yu, University of Chicago Graduate School of Business

The present research concerns decisions with choice options involving a tradeoff between a relatively rationalist attribute and a relatively hedonistic attribute. Rationalistic attributes are colder (less affective), more objective, easier to be translated into economic calculus, easier to be quantified, or more directly related to the primary function of the activity at hand. In contrast, hedonistic factors are warmer (more affective), more subjective, less easy to be translated into economic calculus, less easy to be quantified, and more directly related to the process of the activity at hand.

Traditional decision theorists assume that when choosing between options that have the same current costs, decision makers analyze which option will deliver the highest expected outcome utility and choose that option. This is a consequentialist utility analysis approach. According to this approach, when people are choosing between choice alternatives for consumption purposes and when the choice alternatives involve a tradeoff between a rationalist attribute and a hedonistic attribute, they should consider these attributes only to the extent that these attributes can help predict the consumption utility of the choice alternatives. In other words, if half of the people are asked to predict which option will produce a greater consumption utility, and half of the people are asked to indicate which option to choose, the responses of the two groups of people should be identical. In other words, there should be no inconsistency between predicted utility and choice.

Built on research on reason-based and rule-based choices, our theory is that there is rationalism among decision makers. Decision makers tend to focus on rationalistic attributes and downplay the importance of hedonistic attributes. Compared to the consequentialist utility analysis, decision makers will assign more weight to rationalistic factors and less weight to hedonistic attributes. In other words, there will be an inconsistency between predicted consumption utility and choice. That is, compared to people's prediction of which option will bring the best consumption utility, people's choice will veer toward the rationalistic-superior and hedonistically-inferior option.

Here is an example: Respondents were asked to choose between two free dinner sets, each consisting of four dinners to be consumed over the next four weekends. One set of dinners decreases in price from week 1 to week 4, but the overall value is slightly higher. The other set of dinners increases in price from week 1 to week 4, but the overall value is slightly lower. Respondents indicated their preference either by making a choice between the two sets of dinners, or by predicting which set they would enjoy more. In predicted enjoyment, most people favored the increasing but lower-total-value series. But in choice, most people chose the decreasing but higher-total-value series.

We have also found similar inconsistencies between predicted experience and willingness-to-pay. We will present other results, covering several representative subcategories of lay rationalism, including the tendency to focus on objective and quantifiable attributes, the tendency to focus on economic calculus, the tendency to focus on the "sum" of temporally-extended events, and the tendency to focus on the functionality of an activity.

We will discuss the significance and potential problems of using decision/WTP/predicted-experience to study rationalistic decisions, and suggest alternative methods. We also review the relevant literature and discuss the relationship between rationalism and decision rules.

Whereas research on affect-driven decisions suggests that people weigh hedonistic factors too much by the consequentialist benchmark, the present research shows that people weigh such factors too little. We conclude with an integrative framework that reconciles these two apparently contradictory models.

“Decisions by Rules:

Disassociation between Preferences and Willingness to Act”

On Amir & Dan Ariely, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Individuals make many decisions entailing payment or reception of money. Such exchange has been argued to reflect their internal attitudes, utilities or preferences, such that the decisions taken maximize (under a set of constraints) these internal values. For example, if a person schedules a vacation on a date two months into the future instead of a week into the future, all else being equal, it is assumed that this person has an internal state under which the expected pleasure of the later vacation is higher.

However, several streams of research have demonstrated that even predicted actions may be inconsistent with expressed preferences. Such inconsistencies may arise because of the specific context the decision maker encounters (Tversky & Simonson, 1993), the affective characteristics of the decision problem at hand (Fredrick, 2002; Slovic et al, 2002), or the specific elicitation procedure used (Fischhoff, 1991). More recently, researchers have begun uncovering the mechanisms underlying some of these documented inconsistencies. A major driver of such inconsistencies in the realm of consumption was proposed by Prelec (1991) to be the use of rules and morals as opposed to cost-benefit analyses. Prelec focuses on the use of rules in self-control, and identity maintenance. Hsee et al (2003) describe a set of ‘expressed preferences–anticipated action’ inconsistencies and categorizes them into three subgroups of “rationales”—rule like principles that guide behavior, and are sometimes applied even when doing so leads to less preferred outcomes. The current work follows a similar line of thought but instead focuses on one such rule, and attempts to provide detailed evidence for the decision making mechanism itself.

While there is no question that internal states are commonly used as inputs for consumers’ decisions, the main two claims of the current work are that 1) when consumers make decisions, they follow these “moral-like” rules when these are invoked, instead of staying true to their preferences, and that 2) these rules can sometimes be invoked in situations that undermine preference maximization. For example, if the person in the above example will be willing to pay more for the immediate getaway, this will be a preference-willingness-to-pay inconsistency. If the only reason the less preferred vacation was chosen was an unwillingness to pay an equal or greater amount for a delayed positive experience without examining the specific details of this case, the claim that the individual is following a decision rule would be supported.

So why the term “rules”? Unlike preferences these rules are assumed to be general over-arching guidelines for behavior and as such are applied broadly in a legal-like manner—“do or do not do” (hence the term “rules”) (Prelec, 1991). One consequence of their broad application is that there are circumstances in which the rules are not applicable and yet they are applied (again as with many legal systems), resulting in actions that can at times be disassociated from preferences.

Another aspect of these rules is that they have to be learned (while preferences can be either learned or endowed). Some of the

rules are learned from personal experience, while others are based on social, cultural, and moral conventions. Because these rules are learned and are socially constructed they are also not universal and the specific rules that are applied in different circumstances depend on individual, social, and cultural factors.

In order to investigate the mechanism underlying the use of decision rules, the paper focuses on one specific rule of consumption. To do that, one needs to show that behavior follows a systematic pattern that coincides with the “rule” (observe behavior), does not match people’s preferences (measure preferences), and that this happens upon specific rule activation (invocation cue). In fact, it will be argued that money or the act of paying is the cue that invokes this rule, by showing that it is not medium invariant (“paying” with effort does not invoke this rule). Moreover, one must ascertain that the actual mechanism is rule-following-like in nature. This last property can be investigated through the use of priming of rules and lawful behavior, and through personality differences.

The paper attempts a deeper investigation of one particular rule—“One should not pay more for a delayed experience”. Specifically, this rule concerns the assumed advantage of having positive experiences sooner rather than later. This rule implies that delay should not be paid for. Pilot experiment 1 demonstrates that there are at least some desirable experiences (concerts being one of them) that are preferred to be experienced later rather than sooner. This preference for delay is established using both choices and discounted expected future happiness as proxies of preferences. Moreover, in Pilot experiment 2, this preference is shown to correspond to the happiness from anticipation of the positive experience. The postulate that the rule implies that people will not be willing to pay more for a delay they prefer is validated in experiments 1 and 2. Experiments 2 and 3 provide further support for the proposed mechanism by demonstrating that the magnitude of disassociation is related to the saliency level of invoking cues for the specific rule, and to saliency of rule-based behavior in general. Experiment 4 demonstrates that when using a different “payment” method, exerting effort, participants do not exhibit the predicted action–preference inconsistency, but in fact, are very consistent in their preference for the delayed concert. Finally, Experiment 5 demonstrates that individuals that tend to follow rules exhibit a greater disassociation.

Decision mechanisms such as “decisions by rules,” provide a new perspective on the ways in which individuals carry out their decision policies. Decision theorists have largely assumed that people make decisions according to a set of preferences or feelings. Such views imply a search for at least a local optimum, or for a close enough estimate when exact algorithms are too costly (use of heuristics). The current work suggests that this is not always the case—decision makers sometimes do not try to consider the best alternative according to their preferences or feelings, but rather act upon pre-imposed decision-rules that are based on moral or social norms and on behavioral guidelines.

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“Personal Rules (Are Meant to be Broken)”

Drazen Prelec, MIT, Sloan School of Management

The paper presents a theoretical model of personal rules. Examples of personal rules are: (1) to do the dishes right after dinner, (2) to decline collision insurance in car rentals, (3) to answer the phone when it rings, (4) to refuse panhandlers (5) to floss before bed, (6) to return purchases that are (even slightly) damaged or spoiled, (7) to decline consulting assignments. Much of our decision-making is governed by application of personal rules rather than utilitarian cost-benefit calculations, as has been argued by Ainslie (1992), Prelec (1991), and Amir and Ariely (2003), among others.

Personal rules seem to arise in situations where a decision between two alternatives is required, but there is a chronic mismatch (or, in extreme cases, an outright incommensurability) between the attributes involved in the decision (Prelec and Herrnstein, 1991). Because of the mismatch, a person is inclined or tempted to do one thing, but yielding to temptation places some larger values at risk. For example, while the benefits of accepting a lucrative consulting assignment are relatively well-defined, the costs of the taking on the assignment are diffuse, hard to evaluate, and experienced indirectly, through lower performance or satisfaction with other activities. This creates a bias in favor of accepting the assignment. The bias can be counteracted by a personal rule against consulting.

A key paradox about most personal rules is that although on the surface they appear to be an all-or-nothing constraint on behavior (e.g., the rule “refuse consulting assignments” means “always refuse consulting assignments”), in practice they are often broken. Even a person with an anti-consulting rule may encounter consulting opportunities that are too good to refuse. To function and be useful a rule doesn’t have to be followed 100% the time. One can have a rule and break it, so it seems.

In this paper, I develop a self-signaling model of personal rules, extending the general self-signaling framework developed by Bodner and Prelec (2001). The general model rests on a distinction between two types of reward (or utility): reward that flows directly from the causal consequences of choice, whether these consequences are immediate or delayed, and diagnostic reward, which is the pleasure or pain derived from learning something positive or negative about one’s own internal state, disposition, ability, or future prospects. People are presumed to be uncertain about where they stand with respect to these broad attributes, which in turn makes their choices diagnostic. For example, taking a drink before noon is diagnostic of alcoholism; hard exercise is diagnostic of health, willpower, perhaps even financial success, and so on. Anticipation of such diagnostic reward, or fear of diagnostic pain promotes self-control and inhibits self-indulgence.

In the original self-signaling model (Bodner and Prelec, 2001), a choice was treated as a signal about an underlying state (e.g.,

virtue). In this paper, I assume that in the presence of a personal rule, choice becomes a signal of a long-run propensity to behave in a certain way (e.g., to spend money on luxuries, to neglect family life in favor of work, etc.). In other words, a rule makes a single decision diagnostic about the chances of achieving or failing with respect to some broader objective. Diagnosticity creates a motivation to follow the rule. However, if the level of temptation becomes too high, the rule will indeed will be broken.

The model makes precise the interplay between the diagnostic value of following a rule, and the likelihood that the rule will indeed be followed on any given occasion. In particular, if a rule is ‘strict’ then breaking the rule on a given occasion provides a strong negative signal, while following provides almost no new information. In contrast, if a rule is ‘lax’, then following the rule provides a strong positive signal, while breaking it is not a big deal.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

“If I Could Be Like That...”: The Not-So-Harmful Effects of Social Comparisons on Consumers

Naomi Mandel, Arizona State University

SESSION OVERVIEW

First proposed by Festinger (1954), social comparison theory suggests that people have a drive to evaluate their own abilities, and that they satisfy this drive by comparing themselves to others. Much of the existing social comparison research has examined the harmful effects of exposure to thin, beautiful models on female consumers. In contrast, this session presented recent findings suggesting that social comparisons may not always be harmful to consumers, and in some cases may even inspire consumers.

products. Experiment 1 confirmed that exposure to a successful comparison target increased preference for brands such as Lexus and Rolex, but only when both the target and the subject had the same college major. Experiments 2 and 3 examined mediators of these interactive effects, and found that preferences were driven by the impact of such depictions of successes or failures on participants' expected future incomes.

“Idealized Images, Self-Perceptions and Behaviors of Young Women: Explanation via the Third-Person Effect Model”

Fang Wan, Vanderbilt University

William D. Wells, University of Minnesota

Ronald Faber, University of Minnesota

Although research has found that idealized images in media and advertising affect body image and induce eating disorders, knowledge about the manner in which these images operate is incomplete. This study proposed the third person effect as an alternative model of addressing the underlying mechanisms of how idealized images in advertising exert influence on young female consumers. Survey findings suggest that body enhancement behavior is partially driven by perceptions of the reactions of male “others”—most men, male friends or romantic partners. Depth interview data helped explain this conclusion and reveal the complexity of the processes. These findings suggest that the mechanisms through which idealized images affect perceptions, attitudes and behavior are more complex than previously thought.

“Effects of Exposure to Thin Media Images: Evidence of Self-Enhancement Among Restrained Eaters”

Jennifer S. Mills, York University

Janet Polivy, University of Toronto

C. Peter Herman, University of Toronto

Marika Tiggemann, Flinders University

The effects of viewing media-portrayed idealized body images on eating, self-perception, and mood among young women were examined. Study 1 found that dieters rated their ideal and current body sizes as smaller and ate more following exposure to such images. Study 2 found that strengthening thinness attainability beliefs further enhanced the apparent “thin fantasy” demonstrated by dieters following exposure to idealized body images. Study 3 found that when explicit demand characteristics were present, participants reported feeling worse following exposure to thin models. The complexities of the media's role in body dissatisfaction and dieting behavior are discussed.

“Comparisons with the Good Life: Images of Success and the Preference for Luxury Products”

Naomi Mandel, Arizona State University

Petia K. Petrova, Arizona State University

Robert B. Cialdini, Arizona State University

Television shows and magazines have increasingly portrayed “the good life” in America, where everyone is wealthy and successful. This research examines whether a social comparison activated by a news article can impact a consumer's desire for luxury

Consuming Activism: Peace, War, and Consumer Research

A. Fuat Firat, Arizona State University

ABSTRACT

This paper reports an ethnographic study of activists in a current peace movement. Through observations of and extended conversations with twenty-three informants, the researcher attempts to understand the factors that most influence the orientations and behaviors of activist members of a peace alliance. The paper also attempts to provide some discussion on the domain of consumer research and definition of consumption. The claim is made that current definition of consumption and consumer may be limiting our ability to gain insights into the human condition through consumer research.

INTRODUCTION

There is a fast growing literature in consumption activities that are outside the sphere of activities conventionally deemed as consumption, that is, acquisition, use and disposal of goods and services (see, for example, Belk 1991; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Roberts, Scammon and Schouten 1988; Schouten and McAlexander 1995). Yet, there have also been concerns as to whether any and all human behavior can be considered as consumption, whether there may still be some utility in delineating a certain set of behaviors to be studied under the rubric of consumption. Is, for example, someone participating in a “meals on wheels” program, where volunteers carry meals to people in need, a consumer in this activity? Yes, s/he is usually driving a car or riding a bicycle to carry the meals and, as such, s/he will even conventionally be considered as a consumer, but is the whole activity in which the car is used consumption; is carrying meals to the needy a consumption activity? Therefore, should such behaviors be the domain of consumer research?

Sociological and anthropological studies have implied that distinctions made between production and consumption depended on the definitional constitution of value in modern economics, but that such constitution of value is debatable (Bataille 1985; Baudrillard 1981; Bourdieu 1984). Based on this literature, it has been argued that distinctions made between production and consumption, producer and consumer are culturally constructed, thus historically contextual and arbitrary (Firat 2000). The conventional content of consumption has further been challenged by studies that expose the “consumptive” nature of performative, anti-market, counter-consumption movements or activism (Kozinets 2002).

The purpose of this paper is to illuminate some of the issues raised above about the nature of consumption and consumer research by studying a group involved in the current “Peace Movement,” an activist movement that proposes peaceful policies to deal with terror acts, as specifically exemplified by the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., and opposes the use of military force as a solution. Some theoretical propositions are advanced in the conclusions.

THE STUDY

This research was performed in a large metropolitan city in southwestern United States. It is an ethnography of contemporary activism. Participant observation was the methodology used in studying an organization of peace activists.

The Organization

The organization studied is a loosely organized alliance without any elected or appointed officials except a treasurer. Around eleven to fourteen different groups are represented by the alliance's

members, but many members participate as individuals, without any group representation. The groups represented include faith and church based organizations, peace organizations, civil rights organizations, and other organizations for varied social causes.

The decisions are made by all who come to the general assembly that meets every other weekend. This body assigns tasks to several ongoing committees and infrequently formed ad-hoc committees. The most central committee is the organizing committee that meets on weekends alternating with the general assembly. Other ongoing committees are the events committee (planning the events to be undertaken by the alliance, such as peace rallies), the education committee (planning the educational programs to be undertaken by the alliance), and the outreach committee (planning the contacts that the alliance decides to make with other organizations). An early media committee was later combined with the events committee.

At each meeting of the general assembly, two people who volunteer to lead the discussions at the next meeting are selected. These two people, along with all who choose to come to the organizing committee meeting, are responsible for putting together the agenda for the next general assembly. The organizing committee discusses what topics need to be on the agenda, organizes tasks that were assigned by the general assembly, hears committee reports, and makes budget allocations for the tasks that have been authorized by the general assembly. Membership in all committees and in the alliance is based upon turning up at the meetings.

The alliance has many ongoing activities. The core of these activities is the varied weekly vigils. One vigil is called “Women in Black” and is an extension of such vigils across the world, where women clad in black and wearing black veils stand silently at a central spot and distribute flyers of information. This vigil takes place on three different days of the week in different parts of the city—the city library and two separate campuses—with participation of different women. The numbers have been changing between six and twenty-five in these vigils.

Another weekly vigil, on two different days of the week at two different major street intersections of the city, is the peace vigil. At these vigils, with numbers changing between nine and forty, signs are held, flyers are distributed to pedestrians and vehicle occupants, peace slogans and songs are voiced. Recently, a third weekly peace vigil that focuses on puppets and street theater has started at a major university campus in town.

The alliance also participates in peace and anti-war rallies, gatherings, marches, and teach-ins that are organized by other organizations, sometimes in partnership with the alliance. It has been active, for example, in the worldwide peace marches organized on February 15, 2003, and March 8, 2003. It was also very active in the 2003 Martin Luther King, Jr., march that had a strong peace contingent and message. It is the local organizer of the global “Candlelight Vigil” that is to take place on March 16, 2003. Two major peace concerts were organized by the alliance in cooperation with student and municipal bodies.

The Informants

The alliance now has several hundred “members” in the city and is part of a peace movement across its state that has thousands of participants. This study has especially focused on twenty-three alliance members, of which thirteen are women and ten are men. While there is no official count of the sex distribution of the alliance's membership, most meetings have a majority of women.

Of these twenty-three members, five are professors (two at community colleges), four represent faith organizations (their employment is unknown to the researcher), two are students, four are small business owners, three are retired, one is semi-retired (working out of the home), one works for the Green Party state organization, one is in construction, and one is a state government employee. The youngest is in her mid-twenties and the oldest in his mid-seventies. The researcher participated in multiple activities with this group of members, although for separate events, and had a chance to converse with them at length many times. None of these conversations were pre-planned, but followed the natural course of sharing experiences and thoughts among co-activists.

A Brief History of the Alliance

The alliance was started when a peace organization in the city called for a meeting of citizens following September 11, 2001. Over one-hundred people turned up for this meeting. An original ad-hoc committee drafted a mission statement for the alliance, which was finalized after several weeks of intense discussions. An original organizing committee developed proposals about how the alliance should be structured and operate, as a result of which the structure and operating procedures described earlier were constituted. Later, an attempt at developing a document for short and long term peaceful alternatives to military actions to represent the alliance's view failed due to extreme disagreements on its content and language.

The alliance has continued and undertaken several effective actions, however, despite the ideological differences among its members. While a few of the most active members have dropped out from general assembly and committee meetings due to these differences and other personal reasons (dissertations, address changes, work changes, etc.), they continue to participate in the major events that the alliance takes part in. Recently, there is an attempt at evaluating the alliance's successes and failures in keeping active members, as well as considerations of its future. With the impending war in the Persian Gulf, there seems to be a greater unity of purpose and a rejuvenation of commitment to working for the alliance among its members.

Numbers that participate in the general assembly have fallen from over one hundred in the early days of the alliance to around thirty to forty, sometimes around twenty, currently. While there are no set officers of the alliance, there have arisen a few very active members who regularly participate in the committees and other meetings and who, thus, have become major players in decisions made and tasks undertaken. These members contribute extended time to the alliance's activities and tasks. Seven of the twenty-three informants this study focused on belong to this category.

An interesting development in the last seven months has been that two of the informant members who stopped coming to the alliance meetings have, together with two other informants, who are active members of the alliance, formed a new group that comes together to organize actions—specifically, rallies and teach-ins—inviting organizations to join in, the alliance being one of them. Once the organized action is done, this group disperses until the next action to be organized. They find this format able to react to events much faster and more effectively. This perception may be validated by the fact that this group was the leader in organizing three very successful events: two marches and one teach-in, all of which attracted unprecedented numbers in the state.

SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

While the alliance has been successful in uniting several peace groups together and enabling them to bring in a growing number of people into the peace movement in the state, it has encountered

difficulties. Specifically, while the numbers of people joining the actions have increased, the number of active members who take on tasks has decreased, putting more pressure for time allocation and effort on fewer members. The reason for this is a fractioning of the members of the alliance.

The most significant fraction among the membership seems to have occurred due to three reasons. One is the relatively slow pace and seeming anarchy in decision making. Related to this is the feeling among some that the heated discussions have sometimes become too aggressive and offensive. Several members voiced their discomfort due to their perceptions that they have been attacked and, at times, verbally abused. Other members have found the “endless” discussions too distracting from actions that need to be taken in view of, what they consider to be, looming issues and impending events, got frustrated with the pace of meetings and decision-making, and have left to work with other organizations.

A second reason for the fraction is the frustrations with what some feel to be a failure to be more inclusive and understanding of the values of varied faith and ethnicity based groups. Several have complained that the general assembly is always on Sundays, a day not convenient for certain faiths to allocate to such activities. Others have complained that Islamic and Jewish values do not get equal acceptance. All members agree that the alliance has not been able, and according to some not sufficiently active, to draw into the alliance and the movement members of African American, Hispanic, and Native American backgrounds. These concerns have created discontent among members who, nevertheless, are still active in the alliance.

The third reason for the fraction has been the relations with anarchist groups that are in the peace movement. During rallies and marches, the anarchist groups are more reluctant to follow discipline and rules. While they have not until now engaged in destructive acts during these events, there have been arrests of members of these groups for offenses such as stepping into the traffic during pedestrian stop lights—when the police force expects the marchers to halt the march—and shouting slogans at the police. While practically no one in the alliance agrees with the anarchists' tactics during the peace events, there is a difference of opinion as to whether they should still be allowed in the events. Three major opinions are voiced: (1) anarchist tactics are in conflict with the “peace” message of the movement and, therefore, they should not be allowed to participate in events organized by the alliance, (2) all who are for peace, regardless of their views and tactics should be included, and (3) we cannot control or police who comes to the events, so we should concentrate on what we do, not on what others do.

This disagreement has caused a very few number of alliance members to stop coming to the events. While this is a recurring argument, specifically following every large event, no clear decision has been made to this date.

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS AND PRELIMINARY INTERPRETATIONS

A purpose of this research was to understand the motivations that led people in the alliance to take the positions they took. Why did some stay in the alliance despite their disappointments while others left? What were the reasons that led to the different behaviors among those that did stay, and what caused those who left to take different paths after leaving the alliance? Do insights into these issues enlighten us about people and consumption? Following are some observations and related interpretations regarding these questions.

From conversations with the informants and discussions in the general assembly and committee meetings, it was possible to discern some differences in the political backgrounds of the alliance

members. One difference that seems to make a significant contribution to the variance in behaviors is the degree of knowledge and analysis with which members came into the alliance. Mediating the effect of this was the political orientation of the member.

Members who came into the alliance with the most articulated analyses and greatest degree of knowledge regarding world affairs tended to have the least patience for the slowness of decision making and organizing actions in the alliance. Of these members, however, some left and some did not. Those who left the alliance were the ones who perceived that the links they already had with political organizations, such as the Democratic and Libertarian parties, or organizations with social or environmental agendas, such as labor unions and ecological groups, were strong. As mentioned, while they continue to participate in marches and other events organized or co-organized by the alliance, a common theme that runs through their justifications for no longer participating in the meetings of the alliance bodies is that they can do more with their time allocated to other activities.

Those with articulated analyses and knowledge who did not have perceived strong links to other organizations have stayed with the alliance meetings—meaning the general assembly and committees, and tasks needed to realize alliance actions. Despite discontent with the pace and perceived inactivity, what keeps these members in the alliance is a shared belief that peace is the most significant purpose to work for in a contemporary world where much danger of terror and violence loom. There are, however, following the threat of a war in Iraq, two differing views among these peace activists. One view is that all effort needs to be put into averting a war in Iraq. A second view is to keep the theme of resolving world's problems through peace central, while opposing war in Iraq.

A second stream of differences is observed based on the alliance members' perceptions of the mainstream media. As a result of differing analyses regarding the nature and role of mainstream media, there are two different approaches to how media ought to be encountered. One approach insists on letter writing campaigns, contacting the media to invite them to the events, and is built on the belief that there is sufficient neutrality in the mainstream media to have an impact and representation.

A second approach to mainstream media is based on the belief that they are basically controlled by corporate economic interests, which are currently heavily represented in the government. According to this view, media's representation of movements, such as the peace movement, will be biased and, while there may be some minimal coverage of the peace movement, the overall tone and accompanying items will be orchestrated to undermine the peace efforts. Two sometimes overlapping proposals regarding how the media should be encountered arises out of this approach. One is to not waste time with the media, but to concentrate peace efforts on actions that will carry the message directly to the masses. The second is to target the media and its role in current political predicaments as part of the peace efforts, to get the media interested in its own interests.

Another significant difference in the members' approach to the alliance, maybe a more interesting factor in exploring consumption, has to do with how the alliance is perceived and what is expected of it. A group of members view the alliance very instrumentally. That is, the alliance and their efforts in it are to achieve certain goals that specifically have to do with the advancement of peace and avoidance of war. They often ask that clear, reachable goals ought to be set that, when achieved, success may be measured by the fact that the alliance would be no longer needed. They are focused on the ends of the process. Another group of members focus on the process. For them the ends are not the only, maybe not even the more important purpose of the alliance. The alliance, its work-

ings, the theater of actions and activities constitute not only means to reach ends, but a way of life, a form of existence and, maybe, a model for a peaceful world.

This distinction in the perceptions of the alliance results in more or less a completely overlapping distinction in strategic orientations to the alliance's actions. Members from the ends focused group tend to concentrate and see greater value in actions that are *confrontational*, in the sense that the messages, signs, etc., of the actions take on the policies of the government and other parties, opposing them and calling for change. Their signs at the rallies will say, for example, "No Blood for Oil," "Drop Bush, Not Bombs," "Regime Change in the USA."

Members from the process focused group, on the other hand, concentrate on and express value in *performative* actions. While they participate in rallies and marches with signs such as "Economy in the Service of the People," "God Does Not Only Bless America," and "Let's Try Preemptive Peace," they prefer actions like teach-ins, silent vigils, and street theater.

DISCUSSION

Clearly, this is research that is ongoing, the activism studied may be, at this very time, in its crucial moments. Events may yet create major turns in the reactions and behaviors that are being studied. However, some preliminary insights may be possible now.

One insight that stands out, specifically in relation to "consumption," is the clear distinction in the orientations of the activists between getting involved in activism for the goal(s) to be achieved versus immersing in activism for the experience. In conversations with the informants it is evident that three groups emerge in this respect. One group of members is the goal-oriented one, for whom the experience of being at the meetings and undertaking tasks is quite a miserable, almost a torturous, necessity. They express feelings of time pressures and usually are the first ones to leave when meetings are over.

A second group cherishes the time spent in meetings, finding these to be satisfying social times. They enjoy dwelling on the issues that arise in the meetings and that require involved discussions. Meetings are something they look forward to, as are the events organized by the alliance, where they look forward to interacting with the participants and to having long conversations with co-activists. In effect, for this group, these meetings and events are not simply means to achieve results, but are part of living and being.

A third group has characteristics of both the first and the second groups above. They appreciate that the alliance exists to achieve some goals, but also consider it to be a part of a (worthy) way of living. For these last two groups, being a member of the alliance is not just something they do, but something that defines who they are and how they choose to live their lives. That is, while for the first group membership in the alliance is not a matter of identity, for the last two groups it certainly is.

Based on the conversations with the informants, it is found that the motives that place the members into these groups include, along with some of the reasons discussed earlier, the member's ideological affiliation. These ideologies are not exclusive of each other, but often overlap, making the analysis more complex. However, some tendencies are discernable. Specifically, the ideologies that are most often voiced among the alliance members are politically (most frequently Marxist and progressive), ecologically, anti-consumption culture, feminist, minority/civil rights, or faith based ideologies.

Among the informants, there are two who almost exclusively espouse a Marxist ideology. Both of these members belong to the first, ends-oriented group, as do the four who exclusively espouse

faith based ideologies. One informant who particularly is an environmentalist with also feminist background, two others with strong anti-consumption culture ideologies with ecological values, and one who has a long civil rights activism history belong to the second group, for whom the participation in the alliance is simply a way of life. The remaining thirteen informants who espouse combinations of post-Marxist/progressive, environmentalist, feminist and minority/civil rights ideologies belong to the third, hybrid group. These informants express, in varying words and degrees, the necessity of life styles, as practiced in and through the alliance, to be models for the goals that are sought to be achieved by the peace movement.

The existence, preferences, and behaviors of the “purely way of life” and hybrid groups, and the actions they tend to prefer, as discussed earlier, seem to support some sociologists’ claims that both the form and meaning of activism has been changing, beginning with the 1960s. Berman calls this the aestheticization of politics (Berman 1989) following theories of the new avant-garde (Bürger 1984), while others see it as a “post-” phenomenon (Cohen 1998; Eschle 2001; Grossberg 1992), or the rise of personal politics (Jamison and Eyerman 1994), or the popularization of theory (McLaughlin 1996). In each case, there is the implication that a transformation from the modern sense of agency and activism that was confrontational and instrumental (Rejai 1973) is taking place. The fact that informants who represented the more modern forms of organized ideologies, political or faith based, especially exhibited an affinity to and preference for this modern sense of activism corresponds with this implication.

In terms of consumption, as Roberts, Scammon and Schouten explore with the craftspeople (1988), what conventionally is deemed as work or productive activity or hobby, and the like, is often an act of “consumption,” whether in terms of one performing the act as a way to “enjoy” life or as a means of “living” life. Hirschman (1983), in pointing to the limits of the marketing concept also had presaged the limits of the clear distinction marketers and consumer researchers were making between consumption and production. Artists’ work is often not simply an act of producing artworks, but a model of and a proposal for consuming/living one’s life. Finally, Firat and Dholakia (1998) have observed a growth in the orientation of consumers globally in terms of approaching all of their life activities as constructing *theaters of consumption*. The activists approaching activism with “purely way of life” or hybrid orientations do indeed seem to be interested in constructing theaters of consumption as a way of living.

CONCLUSION

From the point of view of consumer research, the transformation implied in the trends in activism and agency indicated by sociological studies and supported by these observations of a current peace alliance and its members, further tends to indicate the superficiality of the distinctions made in modern thought in defining consumption as separate or different from other human behaviors. Indeed, as the brief study in this paper shows, living, making life choices, acting for social change, or activism for peace are not only consuming the people involved, for many it is the consumption of life experiences, camaraderie, ideologies, ideas, time, and identities as, simultaneously, these same things that are consumed are being produced. This confusion, therefore, makes it difficult to explore our human condition with constructs that are unrepresentative and illusory. They may, in fact, be blocking our insights.

As consumer research continues to break down the received limitations of what is to be or should be studied, consumer researchers may be well advised to consider breaking ground for a new vocabulary.

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Identity, Consumption and Loss: The Impact of Women's Experience of Grief and Mourning on Consumption in Empty Nest Households

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we examine how women use consumption to negotiate the four tasks of grief and mourning, as they experience the loss of children in the empty nest household. From our study we identify the double loss faced by empty-nest mothers: the physical and emotional presence of their child; and the tasks central to the motherhood role: daily maintenance and the production of sociability. We discuss how women use consumption to re-establish emotional connectedness with their children who are physically absent; to reconfigure their mothering tasks in order to maintain the sense of family beyond the empty nest household; and to re-create their sense of self in the life long project of identity formation.

INTRODUCTION

Loss is an important life event that affects women's identities and their patterns of consumption. The empty nest household represents a potentially rich site for researching the dialectic between identity and consumption during periods of transition and loss. In our consumer culture consumption is often used to help negotiate the very difficult life stages including those characterized by separation and loss and the tasks associated with mourning and grieving (Bowlby and Parkes 1970; Kubler-Ross 1969; Worden 1991). Our data illustrates how women's construction of identity and sense of self as mothers undergoes a series of changes as these women confront the stages of 'loss,' experienced as the grief and mourning involved in their children leaving home. We investigate how empty nest women use consumption to help them emotionally re-locate their relationships with their children and to help them refocus and move forward with life (Bowlby and Parkes 1970; Worden 1991, p.10-14). We strive to contribute to the systematic discussion of the dialectic between consumption and the "common elements of loss that are associated with adverse life situations in general" (Murray 2001, p. 219).

We begin with a brief review of the literature on grief, mourning and loss; identity and motherhood; and transition. We then describe our research design and methods; and present the findings. We conclude by discussing how the psycho-social needs of women in empty nest households impact their consumption and market place behavior as their identities evolve in response to changes in their mothering role and their experience of children leaving home.

LITERATURE

Loss, grief and mourning.

As death and its associated emotional, psychological, physical, and economic losses represents one of life's major events, many major role changes and life status transitions can also be understood in terms of loss and the consequences of suffering a loss. These major life status transitions usually force consumers to negotiate a reconfigured or recreated sense of self. Women entering the parental life stage transition of the empty nest household can also be examined from the informants' lived experience of suffering a loss. Thus, women's experience of their children leaving home and its associated impact on women's identities and sense of self can be

understood within the wider literature about grief, loss and mourning (Rosenblatt, Walsh, and Jackson 1976; Worden 1991).

We follow Worden's distinction between *grief* (which "refers to the personal experience of the loss") and *mourning* (as "the process which occurs after a loss") (Worden 1991, p. 34). Grief is characterized by acute and episodic 'pangs' and "the stages of alarm, searching, mitigation, anger and guilt, and gaining a new identity" (Parks 1998, p. 43 cited in Clear and Burggraf 2002, p. 1). "Mourning has four phases: numbing, yearning and searching" (or pining), "disorganization and despair, and reorganization" (Bowlby 1969, 1973, 1980, cited in Clear and Burggraf 2002, p. 1). This is very similar to Worden's (1991) argument that mourning involves the four tasks of: first, accepting the reality of the loss; second, working through the pain of grief and dealing with the feelings; third, adjusting to an environment in which the departed is missing; and fourth, emotionally relocating the departed and moving on with life (Worden, 1991, p. 10-14).

Identity and motherhood.

Children moving out of the home constitute much more than simply the absence of their physical or emotional presence. Our immediate family is a part of our extended self (Belk 1988; James 1890). Not unlike the grieving that accompanies the feelings of self loss experienced during a divorce or with the death of a child or spouse, it seems likely that many women recently in the empty nest stage may also feel a sense of self-loss. Since children are part of a parent's extended self, a child's move out of the house may well be seen as a loss of part of that parent's extended self.

Women's identities as mothers evolve in response to changes in the parent-child relationship, beginning with the arrival of the new baby, and their socialization as mothers (McMahon 1995). Within feminist sociology McMahon (1995) argued that it was important to understand "*what kind of identities*" are produced by the processes of separation, independence and autonomy (McMahon 1995, p. 268). According to McMahon, motherhood allows women to feel they have achieved, "a feminine identity as a loving, caring, responsible person." What was vested in the women's commitment to motherhood was not simply the social identity of being a mother, but also the character of being a caring, patient, responsible adult person; a positively valued character that may be symbolically expressed for many women through motherhood (McMahon 1995).

Surprisingly, there has been very little research on how women's experience and understanding of motherhood changes as they reach the major transition point of their children moving from adolescence to adulthood as symbolized by the empty nest household. The necessity, for instance, of renegotiating relationships of dependence (parent-child) to interdependence (adult-adult) (Berne 1961, Pitman 1982) while still maintaining interconnections and a sense of family and its resulting impact on the consumption behavior of the family has remained poorly understood. This represents a gap in our knowledge about subsequent stages of women's re-socialization as they learn how to mother 'at a distance'; and importantly, how they use consumption to negotiate this transition and the resulting impact of this transition on their market place behavior. The empty nest is an especially interesting stage at this point in

history because it is a life stage that many of the 76 million baby boomers in the U.S. are undergoing, or will undergo during the decade. Further, we are seeing the same phenomena played out in many other developed countries.

Just as importantly, the nature of the empty nest transition is not just about re-defining the mothering role and the child/parent relationship, it also demands re-definition of the parental partnership, the wife/partner role; and often re-negotiation of the equilibrium of the remaining familial relationships (Worden 1991, p. 126). With the continuity of core relationships thus being rendered unstable, many empty nest women seem to experience a dislocation from past relational reference points. In conjunction with such feelings there is then an overriding sense of loss of identity with a concomitant search for new meaning in their lives.

Transitions and Role Status Change

Transitions or liminal phases (Turner 1969) have been described as “a limbo between a past state and a coming one, a period of personal ambiguity, of non-status, and of unanchored identity” and represent valuable sites for exploring the impact of loss on the dialectic between consumption and identity (Schouten 1991, p. 49). Important role transitions generally occur in three stages: separation; transition; and incorporation (Van Gennep 1960). These rites of passage are traditionally associated with major life transitions and events such as birth, marriage and death. The transformation in the mothering role which occurs as children leave home represents a major disruption to their established world and its associated activities, roles, practices and consumption activities that are constitutive of a central part of many women’s identities. These three stages—of separation, transition, and re-incorporation—are therefore very consistent with the role status change of empty nest mothers as their sense of self and identity is reconfigured and adjusted around changes in the enactment of the parental role.

Role status transitions are accompanied by a liminal phase in which the individual holds an ambiguous non-status, and is between two different role statuses, but not firmly grounded in either. In the modern, secular world people often experience liminoid states (cf. Turner 1974) devoid of supportive formal rites of passage” (Schouten, 1991 p.49). Without some type of societal support system firmly in place, consumers attempt to cope with this difficult transition and their ambiguous self-concepts in a myriad of ways. Contemporary consumers who are left to their own devices create their own personal rites of passage which are carried out, at least in part, through symbolic acts of disposition and acquisition of consumer goods. These acts of consumption and disposition allow consumers to utilize products in their role status transitions and in the transformation of their new concept of self. The reconstruction of self that began with separation from the parental role and the end of the original child-parent relationship, is assisted through the disposition of consumer goods and the rituals consumers play out with material objects.

METHOD

After examining relevant literature we began to explore the lived experience of women consumers in empty nest households. We specifically sought to better understand the experiences of women whose children had left the parental home within the last 18 months. We used a feminist perspective and an interpretive research design with two data sets.

The first data set.

Our first data set consisted of twenty-one in-person unstructured interviews with empty nest women whose children had left the

parental home within the last 18 months. The interviews were held in the participants’ own homes and lasted between 30 minutes and two hours, averaging one hour in length and were conducted in Ireland, England and the United States. An informal approach was adopted for the interviews, with the researchers using a broad topic list covering key issues including: changes to daily activities; lifestyle; social networks; consumption patterns; and their role as a mother. We used a purposive approach (Miles and Huberman 1994) to select our sample design, looking for “representativeness by ‘purposefully’ choosing a sample that typifies the population, the theoretical category or the phenomenon to be studied” (McMahon 1995, p. 34). Participants were recruited via friends and acquaintances using a snowball sampling method (Miles and Huberman 1994). The interviews were audio taped and transcribed, resulting in approximately 300 pages of data. Transcribed interviews were read repeatedly by all research team members; themes were identified independently and then discussed amongst the team members. Consensus was reached on each theme discussed in the final manuscript.

The second data set.

The second data set was collected using netnography (Kozinets 2001, 2002) and included participant observation in two online bulletin boards. Our netnographic investigation produced an online data set of over 500 postings to the bulletin boards and also a set of reflexive field notes which represented the written account of the fieldwork conducted in a computer-mediated environment.

We announced on the bulletin boards our presence as researchers interested in the topic of empty nest women, and of our plans to prepare research papers on this topic. Formal observation of the boards lasted for fifteen months, using a mixture of unobtrusive and participant observation. The first board was monitored weekly and more frequently whenever there was a particularly active posting period. New postings usually appeared every day and sometimes there could be up to six postings on the same day. Three hundred and six postings were downloaded for analysis. In addition archival material was also downloaded from this site which produced a further 100 postings for analysis. We monitored the second site for 3 months, and downloaded 95 postings for analysis. We observed that some self selection took place among the members of this second data set, since women having difficulty with this life stage transition are more likely to seek out a site such as these. However, we do not believe this is problematic since we are not suggesting that this is a representative sample. We do believe that the participants in this data set and in our first data set provide insight into the difficulty of this life stage transition for some women.

FINDINGS

Loss in the Empty Nest Stage and the Tasks of Grief and Mourning

“It is a death of sorts... it is the death of life as you know it. Mommy job ending sorta, and you have to grieve” (Online Bulletin Board).

For most of these women their children’s departure potentially represented a double loss: first, the loss of the child, his/her physical and emotional presence and that relationship; and second, the loss of tasks central to the motherhood role: daily maintenance and the production of sociability. The themes of separation, transition and incorporation are interwoven throughout our informants’ stories about the losses they experienced as their children leave home.

Worden (1991)'s four tasks of mourning are also clearly evident as well as the importance of completing these tasks in order to work through this difficult life transition.

Dealing with grief and working through the tasks associated with mourning was clearly evident in our data. Using representative comments, our informants illustrate the many parallels of the losses they felt with those losses described in the literature on grief and mourning. The first task, accepting the reality of the loss (Worden, 1991) was realized by many of our informants, often admitting that this happened before their child even left home. The following woman explains that for her accepting the reality of the loss started during her daughter's senior year in high school:

This year hasn't been bad. It's the second year. The first year was,... (pause) the first year started about Christmas time of her senior year of high school and her graduation of high school and it was just,... (pause) devastating for me. (In-person Interview).

The second task, working through the pain of grief and dealing with the feelings (Worden, 1991) was evident repeatedly, also.

I seem to muddle through for a few days and then something happens to set me back. My daughter came home from college this weekend and it started all over again—remembering how good it was and how awful and lonely it is now. You kid yourself and go about your life as if all is OK until something happens to make you realize it really isn't. (Online Bulletin Board).

The loss associated with the physical and emotional absence of the child was discussed by many:

"Hello to all, Melissa here, one daughter, Sandy, age 19. Sandy married on July 7 and moved to England to live. ...Needless to say—I crashed and burned. It has been 4 months and I am happy to say, I am having some good days, more good days than bad." (Online Bulletin Board).

This woman's description illustrates how she has worked through the pain of grief and expressing her feelings (*I crashed and burned*) and is beginning to adjust to the loss she feels.

There were many examples in our data of the third task, adjusting to an environment in which the departed is missing; (Worden, 1991), although it was met begrudgingly and out of necessity as shown in the following woman's comments:

...and then we took her to school. I cried all the way home. ...I walked in the house and sort of busted up. I cried for days afterwards. I mean, different songs would make me cry. It was terrible! (stresses terrible) And then, with the friends that I had, we sort of commiserated and started doing other things. And in October of last year I got a part time job, (laughter) because I thought, "Okay, I have to do something!" (In-person Interview).

The fourth task, emotionally relocating the departed and moving on with life (Worden, 1991) was also evident in our data. Once women had worked through these very difficult tasks, they often became supportive to others still trying to deal with the pain of this transition. June below provides a succinct overview of her experiences:

My youngest left 5 months ago and just very recently, I'm starting to heal from the pain. I know this doesn't make sense right now and it probably doesn't help you at all, but time has a wonderful way of healing us. I suffered a tremendous loss because being a mother was what I loved best about my life. In fact, I couldn't even imagine a time when all my children would be grown and on their own. But it happens, and the pain for me was excruciating. What has helped me the most is seeing a therapist and learning that it is normal and natural when children grow up and leave. It hurts, but it gets better. I still enjoy a close, loving relationship with all 3 of my grown children. Reach out to friends and professionals for strength to help you through this time. It will pass, I promise, and on the other side you will feel a new freedom and a softer, kinder person inside. Reading this board really helped me and there are others as well on the Internet. If I can offer my friendship, I would be happy to do so. It's important to allow yourself to cry. I cried every day and sometimes more than that for several weeks. It does get better. Please write, if you'd like. I'd like to be here for you if you need me. (Online Bulletin Board).

In describing her loss and subsequent adjustment, another informant talked about how she had found the first six months after her children left very traumatic. Once her children had been away for a while they established a routine for the holidays, and things have become more tolerable. Her relationship with her children has changed and is now more similar to that of adult friends (In person interview) (Berne 1961; Pitman 1982). The next informant also exemplifies the idea of how things have improved over time:

"This year hasn't been bad. It's the second year. The first year was... just devastating for me. ... I mean, I stopped eating. I stopped sleeping.... we took her to school and I thought I was going to die. I cried all the way home. I literally made it from her dorm room to the elevator, which was probably about 6 yards and completely came unglued" (In-person interview).

USING CONSUMPTION TO NEGOTIATE THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL LOSS

Objects Providing Comfort

Women used consumption in various ways to negotiate these stages of separation and transition in order to cope with the physical and emotional absence of their children. As children moved away from home, they took certain belongings with them that involved strategic decisions about creating an identity in their new lives (Silver 1996). They took many meaningful personal items (CDs, clothes, photographs, duvet covers) and useful items of general furnishing (chairs, televisions, and sometimes even their bed). Some mothers felt the need to substitute for the missing items whenever possible to maintain a home atmosphere. This was particularly true in the case of replaceable items such as furniture and decorations. In this way mothers may keep a child's bedroom almost as if it were a shrine to that child.

"Her room is basically, she left it like it would be when she came back ...She left her room as intact, as if she would be home for the weekends or come for a visit. It's just there and I can walk in at anytime and feel her presence there and know that she is going to be back. And see her school pictures and know as time has gone by those pictures will be taken down and replaced with other pictures of her new found friends and her new life. (In-person Interview).

This informant's comments are particularly interesting since it is unlikely that after graduating from college, her daughter will want to move back into her childhood bedroom. This fantasy of sorts, however, seems to have a therapeutic effect, and by maintaining her daughter's bedroom as it was when her daughter was living at home, this woman has been better able to cope with the empty nest stage of her life.

In the following extract Mary preserves her son's bedroom and his displayed collection of baseball cards and balls. Mary uses his possessions to evoke proud memories of her son's achievements and to provide a physical linkage to him:

Mary: "I still have all the baseball cards up there and the balls that are all signed. And they're still out... And, his flight stuff. He didn't take that 'cause he's not gonna be flying up there.

Interviewer: Is there anything in there, that when you see it you just think about the past?

Mary: A memory? His flight bag is lying up against the wall. And every time I walk by, it's lying up there by the door, and the cats sleep on his bed anyway, and I look at it and think, boy, I'm glad he did that and it was so hard. Because we had to really push him to finish it." (In person Interview).

However, children usually left behind items overtly associated with their childhood such as teddy bears and various childhood collections. As demonstrated above sometimes items left behind can emotionally reconnect the mother with her offspring. Other informants related similar experiences. Sheena, for example, played her son's old cassette tapes as she went about her housework and Mandy wore her son's t-shirts:

"So I might sleep in them [the t-shirts] or work in the yard in them, and little favorites of theirs, old school team t-shirts from where they won something, a championship or something... Every time I put it back on again, I can remember them racing in that t-shirt in a special road race, I can remember them wearing it, getting dirty, washing it for them...there's something warm and comforting about sleeping in them". (In person Interview).

Mandy has appropriated her son's t-shirts to help her with the separation phase. There were many other examples in our data of our informants finding comfort in objects left behind by their children. Similar to the ability of a blanket to provide security to babies as they start the 'separation phase' from their mothers, so adults, too, are often able to feel comfort with a particularly meaningful possession that helps them deal with the liminal 'separation' phase. The role of material objects and their symbolic properties during transition was a common theme found in this data (Belk 1988, 1990; McAlexander et al. 1993; Price, Arnould and Curasi 2000; Silver 1996). This woman, for instance, used her grown children's rooms as a transitional object, that provided her comfort and made her feel closer to her boys who were away at college.

"Basically, as strange as it may seem, when you walk into their rooms, their rooms smell like them, even this one. When you just pick up something, even the odor smells like whichever boy it is. That's a strange thing when you walk into there, you think (sniff), that's them all right." (In-person Interview).

She simply walked into their rooms and sniffed, and she immediately felt the presence of her sons. Another empty nest mom,

discusses how looking through the photo albums that her daughter left behind was comforting:

She has them all at school now but when she doesn't have them at school, when she brings them home in the summer, yes, I'll look at them. When she's not there, I'll go look at them and relive her senior year, because her friends are awesome, and I like watching her change. (In-person Interview).

Finally, the increased consumption of technology, seen in the use of the bulletin board, also represented attempts to re-establish some degree of connectedness to replace the physical and emotional absence of their children. These discussions highlight the pain of working through the grief and also showed the level of social and psychological support offered by the board:

"I've mentioned things on some of these boards that I haven't talked to anyone about, not even my friends, so this is like therapy!!!" (Online Bulletin Board).

"All your postings and suggestions help so much. I hope a year from now we can all return after successfully getting on with our lives, to help others just starting the process" (Online Bulletin Board).

The second aspect of loss was associated with the daily tasks of mothering. In terms of 'caring for' their families women talked about a whole series of production type tasks related to the full nest, such as feeding the family; doing the laundry; taxiing children around. These aspects of mothering largely disappeared with the transition to the empty nest. These mothers regretted the disappearance of the tasks traditionally associated with their mothering role:

"I miss watching her [eldest daughter] perform, singing, and dancing the most...I'm having trouble finding something I enjoy as much as watching her perform. I do plenty of hobbies, church work, and have 3 other girls, but the first one is hard. It seems all the activities I said I would do when I didn't have to drive her around anymore just don't seem to be as inviting as I thought they would." (Online Bulletin Board).

The crucial dialectic between the physical, psychological and emotional aspects of parental love and labor (Rothman 1989 in McMahon 1995) are brought into stark view by the transition to the empty nest. The sense of loss because of the lack of the 'daily maintenance' (i.e. *caring for*) (De Vault 1991) comes through clearly here:

"No one needs me any more. When I get home, John doesn't really need me, you don't think your husband needs you, sort of thing. What with the children leaving, no help with homework and things." (In person interview).

The importance of mother's co-ordination work round meal times to 'do family work' can also be clearly seen. This description reflected the idea of the family as the factory for the family (De Vault 1991):

"I would tend to cook a meal at night, particularly to try and encourage Nick to eat. I would try and get him to come and sit with us but quite often David's not with us either so it's hard. I do though try and cook a meal. Actually we sit down more since we've put this table here in the sitting room. We used to

sit round the breakfast bar in the kitchen or have things on our knees. Emma coming back has put more pressure on in some ways in terms of set meals because she's wanted to know what time food's at so that she can go out" (In-person interview).

Caring for family and caring about family (De Vault 1991) are both captured in this woman's description of feeding her family. She describes the investment of her time and effort in terms of meal preparation ("I do though try and cook a meal") and promoting the social setting for its consumption ("I would try and get him to... sit with us"). She revisits the theme of 'sitting down' two or three times as she describes the physical setting for creating family life. This description shows again the range of coordinating skills (De Vault 1991) required to produce family life via meal times by accommodating everyone's different needs, illustrated here by the informant's catering to one daughter while also recognizing the need to plan around another child's timetable of social activities.

Many women made a deliberate effort to overcome their feelings of loss by searching out new social networks for themselves. Anne works part-time. She has recently taken up golf, an activity she can also enjoy with her husband. This, in turn, has helped her build a new social life, based partly on her husband's social networks and golf; thus she has regenerated her social networks by using bridging social capital. In a similar way, Jean has coped well with the adjustment by re-building her networks around social activities. She has developed her own independent social network:

"Yes, it was an adjustment but I adjusted very well I think. I had activities that I wanted to do. I wanted to pursue playing tennis, which I had just taken up about two years before my daughter graduated. I wanted to be a gardener. I love the outside and having more time to just spend there rather than being a chauffeur, so to speak, to the kids." (In person interview).

Adjusting to living without those who have gone is one of the central tasks of grief and mourning (Worden 1991). Consistent with role identity theory, this was where women with a role in the workplace, in addition to their role in the home, often benefited when they experienced the empty nest (Thoits 1983; White and Edwards 1990). For many women these changes to the pattern of their daily lives produced deep role insecurity. Adjustment was more difficult for those women who had not worked outside the home and they were especially vulnerable to feelings of insecurity at this time. Mandy recalls her feelings as she realized that she was "losing" her kids. Her uncertainty over her new situation is evident:

"I had arranged my life around them, and it was unconscious, actually, but my money, my time, projects that I worked on, I would check their schedules first. So now that they are gone, it's very confusing at times, the emptiness that I think is invigorating, for the most part, most days but then it's the other part about what I didn't do with my life to prepare myself for now." (In person interview) [emphases added].

Having spent so much time and energy developing their children's social capital ("I had arranged my life around them... my money, my time"), suddenly they find that networks held together through children's activities have diminished. Many women neglect their own social networks during their years of child rearing, and thus lacked 'bridging' (Putnam 1995, p.2; Onyx and Bullen 2000) qualities of social capital (Bourdieu 1986, 1987). "One way to learn about the nature of connectedness is to explore its absence..."

(McMahon 1995:138). Consequently, feelings of loss and emptiness were commonly expressed.

With children no longer as accessible as they once were, consumption becomes a bridge to connect parents with their children's new lives, both as a way to communicate more effectively at a distance, and as a way to still share a part of their lives. Consumption is used to re-establish some of the social connectedness which had been disrupted with the departure of their children. Technology, such as mobile phones and computers, enables connectivity across different sites for 'doing mothering'. Many mothers emphasized the role of mobile phones in maintaining vital contact with their offspring. The ownership of a mobile phone (both for children and parents) provides reassurance that, in the event of an emergency, children can always establish immediate contact. This reassurance is not restricted to mothers, children also find it comforting to maintain contact with family and their home environment. One informant related how her daughter's mobile bill had been £2000 (approximately \$3,000 in U.S. dollars) in the first month that she had been away from home. Computers too gain significance at this time, as a way to maintain email communication and to even facilitate a physical presence through the use of a webcam, an item that was recommended for purchase by one bulletin board poster to her friends in the empty nester online community.

One of the key challenges for the empty nest mother is determining how to maintain this sense of family across a wider range of settings beyond the household in the wake of the loss of tasks and activities associated with *caring for* her family. Consumption was employed to meet this challenge of ways of mothering at a distance, and to help work through the tasks of grief and mourning. Changes to rituals around meal times and food consumption in our data supports earlier research (De Vault 1991) about the importance of finding intersections of activities for creating family life. Kathleen's story neatly illustrates the change in family meal time routines. Kathleen related how, when her children were at home, she would dutifully prepare the evening meal every morning before she left for work. She was proud of the fact that she had never relied on any readymade meals, emphasizing the nutritional value of her own home cooking for the children, despite the inconvenience to her in terms of her busy schedule. Kathleen is a good illustration of the sacrificial elements involved in feeding the family (DeVault, 1991) and the importance of the family meal (Miller, 1998). In the empty nest household the consumption scape for feeding the family often moves from the private domain of family mealtimes to the public domain (e.g. *We do go out to eat at least once a week sometimes with the youngest daughter joining us*). Several other informants indicated that they would also spend less time preparing food, and were more willing to eat convenience foods or eat out at restaurants. This seems to mark a change away from the mundane, nurturing type activities that Miller (1998) has shown can be ways to manifest love and devotion in families.

Loss of Part of Extended Self

Mothers in the empty nest household felt the loss of their extended self (Belk 1988). McMahon's (1995) study of new mothers had shown how children were seen as "*constitutive and integrative* of the self in many of the women's self-conceptions" (McMahon 1995, p. 140). The experience of attachment had been central to these women's sense of themselves as mothers (McMahon 1995):

"I've been pondering this a lot lately, trying to get to the core of what I'm feeling. And I think it's this...*the part of me that has been the intense, Mama Bear, hands-on, super-involved,*

watchful mother the past two decades...well, really *isn't needed* to do that *anymore*. There's no need for it, so where does that part of myself go? It's not like there aren't other parts of myself, other parts of my mothering profile even, that aren't alive and well and functioning fine..." (Online Bulletin Board).

This highlights, first of all, the intense sense of responsibility experienced as part of the mothering role (Thompson 1996). "*The intense, Mama Bear, hands-on super-involved, watchful mother the past two decades... really isn't need ...anymore*". Second, this woman recognizes how her mothering role has evolved: "*other parts of my mothering profile... alive and well and functioning fine*". Motherhood does not disappear when children leave home, but experience of motherhood changes dramatically. For our informants, moving from the full nest to the empty nest meant dealing with the fear that being 'without children' would mean being disconnected in some way, not just from their children (and thus experiencing loss in the sense of the physical absence of their children). It also meant confronting a sense of loss of their own feelings of motherhood. What they had to explore, as they worked their way through the tasks of grieving, were the different ways to enact mothering across different sites, often using different types of consumption. As women come to terms with the changes they recognize first that "*I'll always be there as their mother*" (In person interview) and second, that "*you just have to move on*" (in person interview).

CONSUMPTION AND GIFT-GIVING

Consumption as gift-giving becomes an important strategy for negotiating the loss of their identities as "loving, caring, responsible" (McMahon 1995) adults. Mothers use consumption to express love (phone calls, cards, care packages, things for apartment or dorm). The following informant describes how she and her husband express their affection and re-create their new role as long distance parents through tangible gifts to their children who have moved away:

"Daddy sent Mandy tons of M&M's, or m-em's as she always called them. We sent her four boxes in the past three weeks...I sent her a food box, then she got very sick and I sent her a medicine box! Then daddy sent her a dehumidifier. Then the candy. And I know daddy has sent her \$\$'s in there, also!" (Online Bulletin Board).

Notice also the use of brands to reinforce familial connections and memories (Olsen 1995). Another mother illustrates how she uses consumption to traverse this liminal period. She talks about gift-giving and the things she has bought for her daughter:

"*I bought a new rug for her apartment, because we only bought one set and I figured she needed more. ...And I send her care packages. I send her a card, like once a week and in between I think I've sent her two or three care packages, no two. But I have some other things I like to buy for her when I see them, like last time I sent her a care package I sent her a CD and a magnet for her fridge and some jiffin pops... they're like a kool-aidy stuff... just fun stuff... She loves getting real mail! She says e-mail is great fun and she hears from everybody, but... My mom will send her a card occasionally, sometimes with cash involved—she likes those. ...And it's fun for me too.*" (In-person Interview). [emphases added]

Mothers help their children to personalize and appropriate their new living spaces (e.g. *I bought her a rug*). An important

opportunity for expressing love and enacting their new identities as empty nest parents was evident with many of our informants who helped their adult children become more comfortable in their new homes. Informants often made purchases of food and more general household items such as furniture and household decorations. They continued to undertake 'mothering at a distance' by putting together and sending off care packages; boxes of medicines; sweets; and small fun gifts (e.g. "*kool-aidy stuff...just fun stuff*").

DISCUSSION

We can trace themes which relate to the four tasks of mourning and grief (Bowlby and Parkes 1970; Worden 1991) in these women's stories of their experiences of the empty nest household. Worden (1991, p. 10-14) argued that in order to complete the tasks of grief and mourning successfully, it is necessary to actualize the loss; identify and express feelings such as anger, guilt, anxiety, helplessness and sadness; adjust to living without the departed; facilitate emotional relocation of the departed; and provide time to grieve. Further although both of our data sets include informants from at least three countries, the grief, mourning and the associated consumption behaviors revealed were consistent across the data—regardless of the informants' country of residence. We suggest that the experience of the empty nest mother, although unique and nuanced for each individual, appear to be a universal phenomena commonly experienced by women new to the empty nest stage in developed countries.

Accepting the reality of the loss: "The idea of being without children was not experienced simply as an absence but as a *loss*" (McMahon 1995:138), which confirms the themes of mourning and grief (Worden 1991). Women clearly experienced loss across all aspects of their mothering role; and describe it "as a death of sorts" (Empty Nest Bulletin Board). Their stories showed that accepting the reality of the loss was central to allowing them to emotionally re-locate their relationships with their children and move forward with life (Worden 1991, p. 10-14).

Working through the pain of loss. Many of these women's stories show them working through the pain, and especially the feelings of sadness and helplessness. Many women initially felt quite overwhelmed by the loss of children from the family home and they dealt with the initial trauma, grief and pain in a variety of ways, typically played out with consumption behaviors. Some used drugs (e.g. Wellbutrin) to help them cope with the painful emotions; some used established personal social networks as they worked through the experience; some sought solace outside their established social networks (e.g. on bulletin boards). They missed not just the physical and emotional presence of their children, but also they anticipated the loss of their roles as mothers. Role identity theory suggests that, when children leave their parents' home, their departure will be associated with a decrease in parental well being (Thoits 1983; White and Edwards 1990). However, this premise rests on the assumption that launching one's children means that the parent then abandons the parental role. Many scholars reject this premise and believe that once individuals have had children, then they continue to occupy a parental role throughout their lives. Our study supports this as we found evidence that the role of mother evolves and changes, but does not disappear, and we found considerable evidence of how women adapted the tasks of *caring for* and *caring about* (De Vault 1991) so that they re-constituted their identities as 'loving, caring, responsible adults' (Worden 1991).

Adjusting to the environment without the child. Women's understanding of motherhood is altered as they experience the transition to an empty-nest household. This has implications for their changing perspectives of sites for production and consumption in 'doing family work'; and their further re-socialization as

mothers (McMahon 1995) as they adjust to the absence of their children.

As motherhood had symbolized connectedness (McMahon 1995) it was the loss of social connectedness and social capital which was particularly hard to bear. The levels of distress experienced seems to be directly related to the variety and degree of enmeshment of the different role sets and the associated networks that represent the informants' social capital. In the empty nest stage these parents' and children's sets of social capital start to be 'decoupled' and the experience of that decoupling process is more or less painful depending on how 'enmeshed' these sets of networks are; and the centrality of the children's social networks to women's identities and sense of self. As the social networks that had been dependent on children dwindled, many women experienced a concomitant crisis in role identity. Scott (1991) argues that the diversity of networks and their linking to a variety of roles are a major source of self-esteem and that adjustment is easier if not dependent on one role. Thus, one of the major factors to influence the extent of the crisis in role identity associated with adjusting to the environment without the child depends on whether a woman has her own independent social networks that allow her roles outside of her mothering home-based ones. Varied social networks, if independent from those of the children, can offer a stronger support system. These networks may be career, hobby or community-related. For example, several women described the solace they found through their professional activities, their volunteer work, church group, or health club. For others it was a regular coffee morning with friends that had been meeting for many years. This is consistent with other scholars who argue that playing multiple roles in society helps to insulate an individual from emotional threats to a specific role (McAdams 1997).

Emotionally relocating the child and moving on with life. What was vested in the women's commitment to motherhood was not simply the social identity of mother, but the identity of the extended self of the woman. This emphasises the importance not just of relocating their children, but also of the women relocating themselves (Worden 1991) in their new world—and learning to 'mother at a distance' and thus become re-socialized into a different way of mothering.

CONCLUSION

This interpretive study explored how women used consumption to negotiate the transition phase represented by the empty nest household, and their adjustment to new identities; the re-configuration of roles, tasks and networks; and the experience of and response to the disruption of their social and emotional capital. Our study argues that "there is no single meaning or experience of being a mother" (McMahon 1995, p. 263) or of the experiences of grief and mourning suffered following the loss of children from the family home. What happens during periods of transition—as represented by the empty nest household—is a major readjustment of the tasks associated with the mothering role within the life-long project of identity formation, and we can clearly see the psycho-social needs and its respective impact on consumption and market place behaviors. Future research could usefully explore other aspects of consumption linked to experiences of being a woman and mother at a variety of intersections (e.g. race, class, age, sexuality) in relation to different points of transition and the concomitant potential sources of loss, grief and mourning (e.g. children starting school; divorce; death of child or spouse; career break; (re)-starting work).

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From Patriotic to Tasteless: Exploring Consumer Reactions to 9/11/2001 Related Advertising

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ABSTRACT

In the weeks following September 11, 2001 marketers responded with a variety of advertising messages directly related to the events of that day. Four categories of advertising emerged from our content analysis of all newspaper advertising in the New York City area: condolence, information, inspirational or patriotic, and commercial. To better understand consumer reactions to these advertisements, we measured Attitude Toward the Ad and recorded consumer reactions. Our results suggest gender differences and a wide variety of attitudes for each category. In addition, consumer comments reflected a bipolar evaluation from deep-seated feelings of patriotism to outright cynicism.

In the days following September 11, 2001, marketers appeared to be concerned about consumers' reactions to their advertising. As a result, some removed all of their advertising from the media, believing it was not a time for commercialism, while others, feeling a need to communicate to consumers about the events, placed advertisements the very next day. Advertisements related to 9/11 first appeared in newspapers, but eventually spread to radio, television, outdoor, the Internet, and direct mail.

The research described here is taken from a larger study consisting of a content analysis of the newspaper advertising related to 9/11. Our analysis of the appeals used in these advertisements suggested four basic types of advertisements: (1) condolence, (2) inspirational or patriotic, (3) informational, and (4) commercial advertising (McMellon and Long 2003). Many of these advertisements used some type of patriotic appeal (e.g., a picture of the U.S. flag), no doubt in the belief that the use of patriotism as part of their message strategy would evoke positive attitudes from consumers. Yet, as Gelb (2002) and others (e.g., Elliott 2001; Garfield 2001) suggest, the combination of commercialism and patriotic appeal may instead evoke negative attitudes in consumers. We could find nothing in the academic literature examining the important subject.

Over 1,400 advertisements referring to 9/11 appeared in the local New York City newspapers in the first month following the attack. Obviously, advertisers felt this was an important issue to address, yet no one to our knowledge has made a systematic study of consumers reactions to these advertisements. As a starting point, we measured attitude toward the ad (Aad) for a variety of 9/11 related advertisements. This is an appropriate measure as attitude toward the ad (Aad) has been widely used over time and has been shown to influence both brand attitudes and purchase intent (MacKenzie and Lutz 1989). In order to further our understanding of consumers' attitudes, we also conducted qualitative research and examined written comments about individual advertisements.

We begin with a discussion of the four types of message appeals reflected in our prior content analysis of 9/11 advertisements. Next, we describe our data collection method. The paper concludes with our analysis and findings.

BACKGROUND

Although the 9/11 related advertising was placed in all types of media, we focus on newspapers, as they appeared to be the dominant outlet for these messages in the New York City area. Because of the characteristics of newspaper advertising—immediacy, cost effectiveness, and short closing times—advertisers were able to respond immediately to the event. Our prior research employing content analysis of newspaper advertisements during

the one-month period after 9/11 suggested four types of message appeals (McMellon and Long 2003). Although more than one type of appeal might appear in any single advertisement causing some confusion in categorization, generally a single message appeal dominated. Descriptions of the four types of message appeals along with examples of representative advertisements follow.

Condolence Advertising

Advertisements categorized as "condolence" tended to be emotional in nature. They used words such as "condolences," "prayers," "sadness," "sympathy," "suffer," and "tragic." In Figure 1, the Emigrant Savings Bank advertisement is representative of a technique that combines sympathy (e.g., "Our deepest sympathies and prayers...") with a patriotic motif. In this case, the use of the words, "God Bless America," with the iconic images of the American flag and the Statue of Liberty provide the patriotic symbolism.

Inspirational or Patriotic Advertising

Meadow (1981) identified this particular type of appeal as communicating pride in America and its values. The advertiser used symbols (e.g., U.S. flags or the colors red, white, and blue) or words (e.g., "United We Stand" or "God Bless America") that were meant to evoke patriotic thoughts and feelings. These advertisements used heroes, rebuilding, and courage as themes in an attempt to elicit feelings of hope or of a defiant American spirit. Advertisements in this category ranged from those that were clearly inspirational or patriotic to those that began to approach commercialism. For example, more than one consumer, when asked to comment on advertising with a patriotic appeal, stated that the name of the firm was too large, thus detracting from the patriotic aspect of the advertisement. In Figure 2, Computer Associates attempts to evoke feelings of patriotism using simple, yet strong imagery and a patriotic slogan.

Informational Advertising

Informational advertisements provided helpful, factual information to consumers. For example, they covered such topics as an announcement that the firm was still open for business, had started a fund for helping victims, or was there to help those who were in distress (e.g., providing assistance to fill out insurance claims forms.) Figure 3 provides information regarding the availability of free flag posters at a local store.

Commercial Advertising

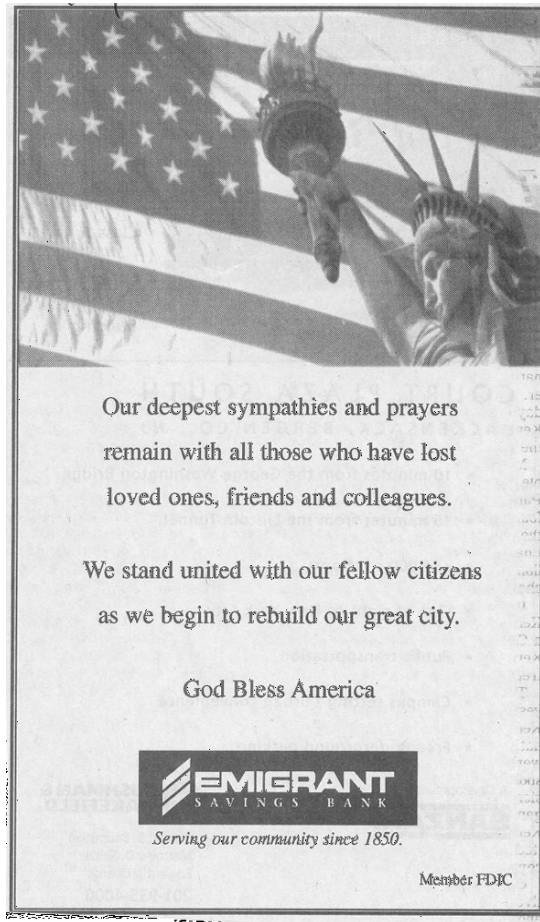
Advertisements categorized as "commercial" looked very much like traditional product or service advertisements, with the exception of an added reference to the events of September 11th. They used various patriotic symbols or phrases along with a strong sales pitch for their products. In Figure 4, Baron's Auto Mall proclaims "God Bless America" followed by "ONLY \$20 DOWN ON EVERY CAR IN STOCK."

CONSUMER ANALYSIS

Measures

In order to understand consumer's reactions to the 9/11 related advertising, two approaches were used: (1) Attitude Toward the Ad (MacKenzie and Lutz 1989) and (2) an open ended question requesting opinions on an exemplar from each category.

FIGURE 1



Our deepest sympathies and prayers remain with all those who have lost loved ones, friends and colleagues.

We stand united with our fellow citizens as we begin to rebuild our great city.

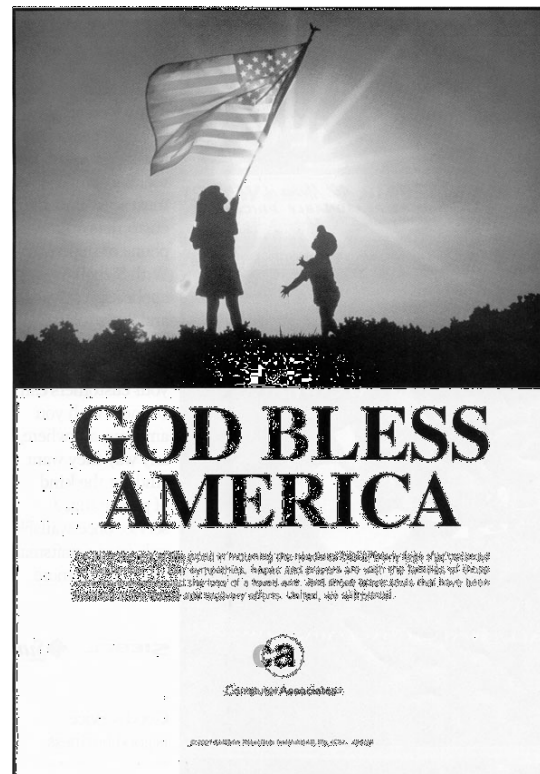
God Bless America

EMIGRANT
SAVINGS BANK

Serving our community since 1850.

Member FDIC

FIGURE 2



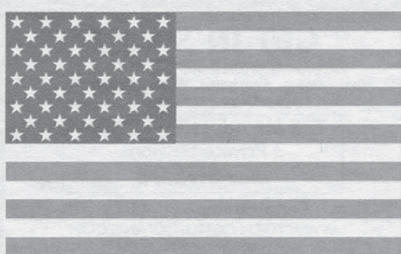
GOD BLESS AMERICA

...the people of the United States are united in their sympathy for the victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and for the brave men and women who have lost their lives in the line of duty. We stand with you in your time of grief and sorrow. United, we are stronger.

CA
Computer Association

...the people of the United States are united in their sympathy for the victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and for the brave men and women who have lost their lives in the line of duty. We stand with you in your time of grief and sorrow. United, we are stronger.

FIGURE 3



Many readers let us know that they have been unable to find American Flags in area stores as the demand for flags has been overwhelming.

We know that many of you would like to display the flag to show your support for our country and the victims of last week's tragedy.

As a courtesy to our readers, we're providing American Flag posters free of charge at the Newsday Store. The store is located at 235 Pinelawn Road in Melville, and is open from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Newsday
It's where you live™

This poster is a public service of the Newsday Marketing Department.

FIGURE 4

God Bless America!

BARON AUTO MALL of Queens

INDOOR SHOWROOM BUY IN COMFORT!

ALL MAKES & MODELS: Luxury, SUVs, Domestic & Imports

ONLY \$20 DOWN ON EVERY CAR IN STOCK!

2 DAYS ONLY! MON 9/17 & TUES 9/18

BEST BUY MENU

'94 Taurus Wagon \$1,995	'95 Chrysler Cirrus LX \$3,995	'99 Nissan Altima GXE \$8,995	'97 BMW 318i \$12,995
'99 Dodge Neon \$3,295	'97 Mitsubishi Galant ES \$4,995	1999 Ford Explorer XLT \$11,995	'99 Lincoln Town Car Executive \$13,995

GUARANTEED CREDIT APPROVAL!

STEALS OF THE WEEK!

'98 TOYOTA COROLLA \$4,995	'96 NISSAN MAXIMA SE \$5,995	'96 AUDI QUATTRO \$8,995
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SAMPLE OF PAYMENTS WITH \$20 DOWN

'93 FORD EXPLORER XLT 4WD | '96 DODGE CARAVAN | '97 NISSAN ALTIMA | '99 CHEVY LUMINA

The Aad scale used in this study was the 7-point 3-item measure suggested by MacKenzie and Lutz (1989). The three semantic differential items were good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant, and favorable/unfavorable anchored by agree/disagree. An average of the three items served as a measure of the overall evaluation of the advertisement. In addition, consumers were also asked to respond in writing to one open-ended question: "Please describe the advertisement you have just seen in your own words."

Demographic data on age and gender were also collected as these two variables have been shown in the past as possible influences. For example, Han (1988) demonstrated a relationship among age, gender, and patriotic intensity. Patriotic intensity influenced choice. Although age cohorts (e.g. baby boomers, generation X, and the millennial generation) are difficult to categorize because of overlapping, generational attitudes, the use of age groups as a segmentation tool is growing (Tsui 2001). Thus, we suspect that attitudinal measures will differ across gender and age segments.

Data Collection Method

Graduate and undergraduate students from a mid-sized northeastern university were trained to administer the Aad scale and to collect written consumer reactions to the advertisements. The students were asked to collect 10 surveys when home on their Thanksgiving break. This approach provided some geographic dispersion of the sample, although most respondents were in the New York City area. Because of the local nature of much of the 9/11 related advertising, New York City area respondents provided an appropriate sampling frame. Since much of the imagery dealt with U.S. symbolism, non-US citizens were excluded from the study to avoid any potential bias.

Each consumer was questioned about one exemplar from the four shown in this article. A paper and pencil questionnaire was used to collect the Aad measure, a description of the advertisement, and demographic data.

Sample Description

The sample consisted of a wide range of consumers from the New York City area. It included 541 individuals with a mean age of 35, ranging from 11 to 85 years of age. More than half the sample was female (54.7%) while 45.3% was male.

The respondents were segmented into three age groups: 41 plus ($n=136$), 24-40 ($n=228$), and those below the age of 24 ($n=170$). We chose these segments to reflect noted attitudinal differences for each cohort (Tsui 2001). The 41-plus segment includes three groups commonly referred to as the "GI Generation," "Silent Generation," and "Baby Boomers." This conglomerate cohort can be characterized as more conservative and civic minded than younger groups. The 24-40 age group, which includes "Generation X" and "Generation Y," is known to be more cynical and media-savvy, while the 23 and younger group, sometimes called "Millennials," are less affected by media, more accustomed to violence, and have grown up in an affluent environment.

RESULTS

The Aad scale demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha=.95$). This was consistent with prior results from MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) who reported an alpha of .90. A principal component analysis extracted one factor containing 90% of the variance.

Analysis of variance was used to examine the effects of gender, type of advertisement, and age cohort on Aad. Table 1 shows that there were significant differences for gender ($F=13.022$, $\text{sig}=.000$) and advertisement type ($F=81.032$, $\text{sig}=.000$), but not

for age cohort ($F=2.122$, $\text{sig}=.121$). There were no interaction effects between any of the variables. Tukey post hoc analysis of the advertisement types suggested attitude differences between the Baron's Auto Mall advertisement and all other types. Attitude differences also existed between the Emigrant Savings Bank and Newsday advertisements. In addition, the mean Aad score for each advertisement suggested that Newsday had the highest positive rating, with Computer Associates and Emigrant Savings Bank less positive and the Baron's advertisement scoring the lowest.

Further examination of the data using one-way ANOVAs revealed that females had directionally more positive attitudes than males for all advertisements (see Table 2). Specifically, these gender differences were significant for the Emigrant Savings Bank ($F=8.464$, $\text{sig}=.004$) and the Computer Associates ($F=5.045$, $\text{sig}=.027$) advertisements.

In order to better understand the underlying reasons behind these attitude scores, we analyzed respondents' written comments about the advertisements. Specifically, we asked them to "Please describe the advertisement you have just seen in your own words." Their comments represented a wide diversity of opinion for each advertisement, evoking both negative and positive comments. Interestingly, the advertisements evoked deep feelings of patriotism among some of the respondents, while eliciting expressions of cynicism from other respondents. For each of the four different types of advertisements, the majority of comments reflected the mean attitude scores (positive or negative) reported in Table 2.

Condolence Advertisement—Emigrant Savings Bank

Emigrant Savings Bank's condolence advertisement evoked a mixed response from consumers. On the positive side such comments as "sincere," "appropriate," "hopeful," "patriotic," and "comforting" were used. The negative comments included "cheap shot," "served no purpose," and "taking advantage."

A 25-year-old female stated: "I think it's an appropriate advertisement as it encourages patriotism and unity at a time of despair and distraught (feelings of hopelessness)"

A 25-year-old female says, "This advertisement is a wonderful way to express sympathy for those who have lost loved ones in the terrible tragedy, while at the same time portraying a sense of hope for the future of our country."

A 22-year-old male negatively states: "I feel offended when people try to cash in on the 9/11 event. Let people rest. Do not use a tragedy to try to make money."

A 60-year-old female suggests her feelings run deeper: "Unfortunately in our society, we forget too fast how quickly life can change. For so many their lives were completely turned upside down that day, never to be the same again. I feel it is a good reminder that we never forget that day or the people who lost loved ones."

On a more cynical note, a 20-year-old male feels that the Emigrant Savings Bank is: "A bank that is being sympathetic for their own needs, not necessarily to be sympathetic."

Patriotic or Inspirational Advertisement—Computer Associates

The Computer Associates advertisement elicited the most consumer comments, both in frequency and detail. However, responses to this patriotic/inspirational advertisement were mixed.

TABLE 1
Results of Univariate Analysis for Gender and Age Cohort

Source	Type III Sum of Sqs.	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Ad type	433.494	3/500	144.498	81.032	.000
Gender	22.727	1/500	22.727	12.745	.000
Age cohort	.147	2/500	.00735	.041	.960
Ad type*Gender	4.413	3/500	1.471	.825	.481
Ad type*Age Cohort	14.059	6/500	2.343	1.314	.249
Gender*Age Cohort	.969	2/500	.485	.272	.762
Ad type*Gender*Age Cohort	7.823	6/500	1.304	.731	.625

TABLE 2
Gender Results of Oneway ANOVA for Attitude Toward Ad

Source	Mean*	Sum of Sqs.	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Emigrant Savings Bank	2.7173	16.426	1/156	16.462	8.464	.004
Male	3.0882					
Female	2.4370					
Computer Associates	2.3655	7.452	1/112	7.452	5.045	.027
Male	2.6303					
Female	2.1186					
Newsday	2.1942	.355	1/101	.355	.324	.571
Male	2.2636					
Female	2.1444					
Baron's	4.5598	3.979	1/154	3.979	1.771	.185
Male	4.7237					
Female	4.4042					

* The lower the mean score, the more positive the Aad.

Compared with the other advertisements, respondents' positive comments reflected more emotional feelings with such words as "very poignant," "patriotic," or "heartfelt." There were also some negative comments ranging in intensity from mild (e.g., "it's feel good advertising") to strong (e.g., "bad taste," or "cheap ploy"). Respondents provided more detailed analysis for this advertisement, perhaps because of the strong imagery. A 27-year-old male digs deep into his inner feelings as he describes the advertisement:

"I think that this advertisement says a lot about the events of 9/11 and it also symbolizes what American stands for. I believe the most powerful aspect of this ad is the silhouette of a woman and child playing. This picture is a true unbiased representation of America. America is the home of the free. This is depicted in the silhouette as the mother and daughter frolicking through the fields. In addition, you can not conclude what race or ethnic background the people are from. The only disturbing part is that there is no man in the image, for some it can represent a lost firefighter or dad. The image also repre-

sents the future of America. From the bright sun in the sky we can ascertain that life will go on and the lost will be watching over us. Overall, in my opinion this ad was created in good taste and is appealing to a broad audience."

Many consumers were also cynical about this advertisement because a corporate advertiser placed it. A 24-year-old female writes:

"The ad is an acknowledgement of the losses suffered as a result of Sept. 11. The statements are moving and powerful. However, it is an ad, and because of this fact, I'm trying to figure out the real motivation behind the statements."

A 26-year-old male plays art director while making his point: "I feel the ad does show some sincerity, but the logo should have been smaller to draw less attention to the organization. The focus should have been more oriented towards the families."

On a less cynical note, a 23-year-old male states: "I feel that it is a good gesture by Computer Associates to place their advertisement. You get the feeling that they truly care about what happened on Sept. 11th."

Informational Advertisement–Newsday

Newsday's informational advertisement evoked few strong comments. Consumers tended to give a more literal explanation of the advertisement. It did not appear to bring forth the same level of emotional response as the other three advertisements. Comments such as "an act of support," "tasteful," "they care," "helping," and "positive" were common. The negative comments were milder than those for the other advertisements. For example, "Newsday wishes to raise its public image." However, some respondents saw more than just the simple message of "free flags" in this advertisement.

An 18-year old female states with a hint of cynicism: "While they want to be perceived as patriotic and compassionate toward the victims, I see that they are only doing this just for the appearance. Although Newsday is providing people with posters, they in return are advertising."

A 33-year-old male cynically states: "I feel that Newsday used the tragedy of 9/11 as a ploy to buy Newsday. It was considerate of the people at Newsday to give away free flags but it was another sales tactic."

Deeper feelings were evoked in a 58-year-old female: "I am very sorry that it took such a great loss of lives and a tragedy that shook the world for us as Americans to display our flag or to sing our national anthem with pride, honor and love of country. President Roosevelt said a chicken in every pot, I say a flag in every window and on every lapel."

Commercial Advertisement–Baron's Auto Mall

Baron's Auto Mall evoked the most negative comments, although this viewpoint was not unanimous. Positive comments such as "well done" and "clearly patriotic" appeared in a few respondents' comments, but as one consumer succinctly stated: "One's patriotism cannot be equated with automobile purchases." Most consumer comments reflected this point of view with such words as "opportunistic," "tasteless," and "offensive." (Our favorite negative comment came from a 21-year-old female who said, "It sucked.") There was also a strong strain of suspicion for any automobile advertisement. As one 50-year-old consumer stated, "...most of the prices shown will have hidden costs—usually if it sounds too good to be true, it most likely is." Interestingly, many consumers did not make any comments, choosing to ignore our request for a description. As shown by the mean ranking of advertisements in Table 2, the Baron's Auto Mall advertisement was rated significantly less positive for Aad than the other three.

A 31-year old male speaks negatively about the advertisement and its cynical reflection of American society: "A poorly laid out advertisement which tries to capitalize on the strong patriotic sentiment in the country, at the moment, in an effort to make money. But that is the American way."

DISCUSSION

One basic assumption about this type of advertising is that it usually works in the best interests of the firm that places the message (Waltzer 1988). Our findings suggest this may not be true for some of the advertising placed after the attack on the World

Trade Center. We found significant differences in attitudes and a wide range of comments from deep-seated feelings of patriotism to cynical observations of commercialism.

The results also suggest that males and females respond differently to this type of advertising. Specifically, in the case of the 9/11 related advertisements, females generally scored higher on a measure of Aad than did males for those appeals that had more emotional content. Significant differences were found for both condolence and patriotic/inspirational types of advertisements (i.e., Emigrant Savings Bank and Computer Associates). Interestingly, there were no significant gender differences for informational or commercial advertisements, which, in our judgment, had less emotional content.

Contrary to what we anticipated, age cohort did not appear to be an influential factor on Aad. However, from our analysis of respondents' comments, it seemed that younger consumers more often expressed skepticism regarding the advertisers' true motivations for placing these messages. On a more positive note, for some consumers these advertisements could also elicit deep emotional feelings of patriotism for the U.S. culture. In summary, our findings suggest that the more commercial in nature the advertisement was perceived to be, the less positive the reaction to the advertisement.

Marketers may have placed some of the advertising for patriotic reasons based on small group behavior patterns (Sherif and Sherif 1953; Hinshelwood 1987), while some of it may have been placed for commercial gain. Either way, there are concerns that these types of ads are exploitive, jingoistic (Elliott 2001; Garfield 2001), or self-serving (Coe 1983; Gelb 2002) and that they will evoke a negative response from consumers. We found this to be true for some respondents. Thus, advertisers should use caution when thinking about placing advertising in response to national events. In particular, for industries or companies, which already suffer from negative consumer perceptions (e.g., auto sales), it is likely that these advertisements will be viewed as self-serving.

Our research suggests that firms walk a fine line between being viewed as sympathetic versus exploitive. Companies that wish to acknowledge a tragic event through advertising should consider how they might counter consumer perceptions of commercialism. The effectiveness of this type of advertising has never been supported in the literature (Coe 1983). The events of September 11, 2001 were horrific to all Americans. Marketers should moderate their urge to communicate personal feelings because, although it may be personally satisfying, it may not be in the best interests of the firm.

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A TALE OF TWO 'CITIES'

("It was the worst of times"; "It was worse at times"): Shoppers in Montgomery County, MD and Washington, D.C. during the recent Sniper Attacks

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

I. Introduction:

The string of sniper attacks in the Washington, D.C. area beginning on October 2, 2002 and ending with the capture of two snipers on October 23, 2002, is by now familiar to most in this country (Tucker 2002). Two gunmen terrorized the Washington, D.C. area with their long-range rifle attacks on unsuspecting individuals (Subramanya et al., 2002), while most of them were engaged in some act related to shopping. Before this spree was brought to an end, 10 of these individuals were dead and three seriously wounded (Subramanya et al., 2002). In this article, I shall concentrate on what effect this shooting spree had on various aspects of shopping (e.g., driving to the store) of two samples of residents I surveyed in Montgomery county, MD and Washington, D.C., shortly after the shooting spree ended.

II. Objectives of Study:

More specifically, my intent in this study was to learn whatever I could about the following:

1. How consumers/shoppers in the D.C. area *felt* during the shooting spree,
2. How consumers and consumers/shoppers in the D.C. area *behaved* during the shooting spree,
3. What if anything consumers/shoppers in the D.C. area felt retailers &/or area-governments *could have done* to make them feel more safe during the shooting spree,
4. What, if any, *residual effects* this shooting spree has had on consumers/shoppers in the D.C. area, even after the shooting spree ended, and finally,
5. What *implications* this shooting spree holds for Marketing in general and Retailing in particular.

III. Background:

There is anecdotal evidence to indicate that during the shooting spree, the following were just some of the issues that were understandably, given much attention: (a) victims were mourned (Lew 2002; Purtill 2002b), (b) most people couldn't focus on anything else (see e.g., Stanley 2002), (c) people (Purtill 2002 a & b) and even the Police (Michael 2002) suffered from the stress of living in the sniper's territory, and consequently were given counseling (Abrams 2002; Michael 2002; Rathner 2002), (d) people's lifestyles and outdoor activities were severely hampered (Amato 2002), (e) some prepared to leave the area altogether (Hogan 2002), (f) schools were in a constant stage of siege (Dolinski 2002), and, (g) area retail businesses suffered (Ford & Monroe 2002).

There is anecdotal evidence to indicate that after the shooting spree ended, the following were just some of the issues that were understandably, given much attention: (a) people were thankful to the Police for successfully apprehending the gunmen (Boris 2002), (b) many citizens offered their thanks in prayer that the crisis ended

(Hille 2002), (c) long-canceled/postponed activities were resumed (Spuhler 2002), and (d) others focused on the prosecution of the gunmen (Moore 2003; Johnson 2002; White and Schmidt 2002).

IV. Research Issues:

However, not much, if any attention was given to the following, which was understandable, until now. How did people in the D.C. area shop in this period? If they did not shop in this period, how did they cope with their consumption needs? Did shoppers feel that it should have been the task of Retailers &/or governments to protect them in this period? To answer some of these questions, I conducted a survey shortly after the snipers were caught, of individuals who live, work, go to school and shop in the Washington D.C. area.. I briefly describe this survey next.

V. Methodology:

Questionnaire: The instrument that was used for gathering data in this study was a self-administered questionnaire and was comprised of three sections: (a) in section 1, respondents were queried on how they felt, how they behaved (where they did/did not go, what stores they did/did not shop at, how they traveled to/from stores, how they entered/exited stores, how they behaved in the store), what they felt stores did/did not do to help them shop as normally as possible, what they felt governments did/did not do to help them shop as normally as possible, etc., (b) in section 2, respondents were queried on how they felt about danger and how they assigned blame for this danger in the context of the sniper shooting spree, and (c) in section 3, were some simple demographic questions.

Sample: The first half of this survey was conducted in the first week of November, 2002, amongst the undergraduate students attending a major University in Washington, D.C. (n=72). The second half of this survey (n=52) was conducted at three different points in the Fall of 2002, on three different non-student populations in the D.C. area: (a) 32 questionnaires completed by staff/parents at an elementary school in Potomac, Maryland, (b) 8 questionnaires completed by employees and customers at a gas station in Kensington, Maryland, and (c) 12 questionnaires completed by parishioners of a church in Potomac, Maryland.

VI. Results:

The significant results from this study are too numerous to even attempt to list (let alone explain) in this abstract. Further, many of these findings mask complex subtleties in how different types of individuals react to danger and several of these findings are counter-intuitive.

That having been said, three broad conclusions that can be drawn from this study are as follows: (a) there were some basic similarities in how the two samples used in this study (i.e., D.C.-student-population-based sample versus a Montgomery-county-M.D.-non-student-population-based sample) reacted to the danger from omnipresent sniper attack, (b) however, perhaps more importantly there were several significant differences in how these two populations felt about the sniper-related danger, how they reacted to it as shoppers, who they felt was responsible for their safety and what actions they felt should have been taken (by themselves and

others) to reduce their exposure to this danger, and, (c) the factor structures underlying the shopping-related sentiments of these two populations during the sniper-attack were drastically different.

VII. Marketing Implications:

This study has implications for businesses, but more importantly for retailers, who God forbid should ever find themselves in a similar predicament in the future. They range from obvious, in-store and out-door store-security issues, to merchandise pick-up and delivery issues, all the way to some less obvious findings, such as: (a) various danger-avoidance strategies (e.g., shopping at lesser known, off-the-beaten path type of stores), (b) switching to on-line-shopping-only-during-the-shooting-spree strategies, and (c) store/parking-lot re-design issues, to name just a few.

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Available on request.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The Adaptive and Less Adaptive Impact of Visceral and Cognitive Facets of Emotional Experience

Laurette Dubé, McGill University

Catherine Cole, University of Iowa

Emotional experiences entail a complex mixture of visceral and expressive reactions, which, combined with conceptual representations of these, guide consumer responses to internal and external events of significance. This special topic session featured recent research that pushes the frontier of our understanding of the adaptive (i.e., contribute to consumer welfare) and non adaptive (i.e., impede consumer welfare) impact of the visceral and cognitive facets of emotional experiences on judgments, decision making and behavior.

In support of the adaptive value of the visceral facets of emotional experience, Cole, Denburg, and Bechara reported results from two studies demonstrating that normal older persons with decision making impairments on a laboratory task that is sensitive to the integrity of the ventromedial prefrontal cortices (VMPC), an area of the brain that is central to emotional processing, were more likely to be deceived by misleading advertising than either normal older adults without such decision making impairments or normal younger adults.

The second presenters, Shiv, Loewenstein, Bechara, Damasio H., Damasio A., reported studies in which normal individuals and patients with bi-lateral lesions in their ventromedial prefrontal cortex (VMPC) engaged in an investment task. The investment task was structured such that the optimal strategy would be to invest in all rounds since the expected value on each round is greater than a dollar. Results were supportive of non adaptive value of emotional experience. Specifically, the authors found that normal individuals deviated more from the optimum than VM-patients, hypothetically because they were reacting emotionally to the outcomes the previous round(s), while VM-patients did not. Normal individuals were probably being negatively affected by memories of emotional experiences in prior investment rounds, becoming more risk-averse if they lost and more risk-seeking if they won, regardless of their knowledge about expected value.

In the third paper, Dubé and Paquet explored the possibility that individual differences in a cognitive facet of emotions, i.e., how emotional experience is conceptually represented in one's mind, modulate the power of emotions in playing their adaptive and less adaptive roles as responsive and guiding devices. Results show that more complex conceptual representation of emotion was tied to a less powerful impact of emotions as a guide for judgments and behavior, regardless of whether the function of these responses was adaptive or not. In addition, individuals whose representation was organized around positive affects, emotions were more powerful predictor of drives, judgments and behaviors than they were in other individuals whose structure of experience was not dominated by positive emotions.

The first discussant, Antoine Bechara, presented a basic neuroscience model of emotions, emphasizing its power and boundaries in terms of its ability to inform consumer research by its description of somatic processes and brain events underlying emotional experience and its impact on judgments, decision making and behavior. He also suggested innovative development by integrating more of the complexity of conceptual representation and social interaction into research on the visceral, experiential facets of emotions in order to better specify conditions leading to adaptive or

not adaptive functions. The second discussant, Ulf Boekenholt, presented a model in which experiential and conceptual representations of both affects and cognitions are seen as driving decision making. He addressed the challenges bearing on design, measurement, and identifiability issues in modeling the influence of emotions on consumer choice, considering that experiential and conceptual information in many ways, feed each other in an interactive manner as they modulate the adaptive and less adaptive roles emotions may play.

Exporting Media Products: Understanding the Success and Failure of Hollywood Movies in Germany

Thorsten Hennig-Thurau, Bauhaus-University of Weimar
Gianfranco Walsh, University of Strathclyde
Matthias Bode, University of Hanover

ABSTRACT

Rising production costs in the US motion picture industry make overseas markets essential for movie studios' economic survival. However, movie marketers can rarely build on systematic research when attempting to customize movies or movie-related communications to different cultural settings. In this paper, we draw from cultural theory to develop a conceptual framework of US movies' success in foreign markets. Propositions are then developed that offer insight into the differing impact of a number of factors on movie success in the US and Germany. Marketing implications will be discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The US motion picture industry today suffers from an enormous rise of production and marketing costs. Average costs for making a movie rose from \$9.4 million in 1980 to \$54.8 million in 2000. To market a movie in 1980 it needed an additional \$4.3 million, while average marketing costs have reached \$31 million in 2001 (Lyman and Holson 2002). Due to rising costs, a global perspective has become essential to profitably market an American movie. While from the 1950s up to the 1980s exports constituted around one-third of American movie revenues, in 1997 overseas box office equaled for the first time the domestic figures. In 2002, the ten most successful Hollywood-produced movies gathered a domestic box office of \$2.4 billion, or 44.6 percent of these films' global receipts of \$5.5 billion (The Movie Times 2003).

As a reaction to this development American studios have begun to incorporate the overseas marketing in their domestic management systems (Dunkley and Harris 2001). However, to fully exploit the enormous success potential of overseas markets, it is necessary to understand the reasons why films perform differently in the US and abroad. For example, the first part of the AUSTIN POWERS series earned only \$250,000 in Germany, in contrast to a US box office of \$54 million. There is also evidence that movies that failed in their domestic release can be largely successful abroad.¹

In this paper it is argued that to optimize the success of Hollywood movies in foreign markets a global perspective is needed. To consider the global perspective the research focus is the success of American movies in the German market as the most important export market (Brown 2001; see also Neelamegham and Chintagunta 1999), with US productions accounting for almost 82 percent of admissions and hence dominating German movie theaters. A cultural framework is used to explore possible factors determining the success of US movies released abroad. Propositions are developed and discussed with references to managerial and research implications.

PROPOSITIONS ON A DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT OF MOVIE SUCCESS FACTORS ON BOX OFFICE

Culture impacts a movie's box office in three ways. First, a movie's box office within a specific country is determined by

different factors, including the movie itself. Key movie characteristics that influence the reception of motion pictures by its potential audience include the movie's genre (e.g., Litman 1983), its style (e.g., Wyatt 1991), its level of symbolicity (e.g., Hennig-Thurau, Walsh, and Wruck 2001), and the starpower of the movie (e.g., De Vany and Walls 1999). A country's culture influences the consumer's perception of these movie characteristics which results in an indirect impact of culture on movie box office. Second, the awards a movie receives (e.g., Nelson et al. 2001) and its certification (i.e., ratings by MPAA; Prag and Casavant 1994) as movie-related concretizations of a specific culture also influence box-office success. Third, a movie's perception by foreign-country consumers is not only influenced by the movie itself and the respective foreign country's market and culture, but also by the movie's success in its home country (De Vany and Walls 2003).

In Figure 1, we present a conceptual framework of the factors influencing movie success in the US and Germany and discuss the model relationships. The framework will allow us to derive propositions about the reasons for an American film's success or failure in the German market. It is based on a differentiation between a vertical and a horizontal direction of thought.

Regarding the *vertical* direction of the model, a movie's box office within a specific country (here: USA) is determined by different factors, including the movie itself. The movie is embedded within a specific cultural context and a market structure which both also influence its box office. First, culture and market influence the consumer's perception of movie characteristics which results in an indirect impact on movie box office. Second, they have also a direct impact on box office.

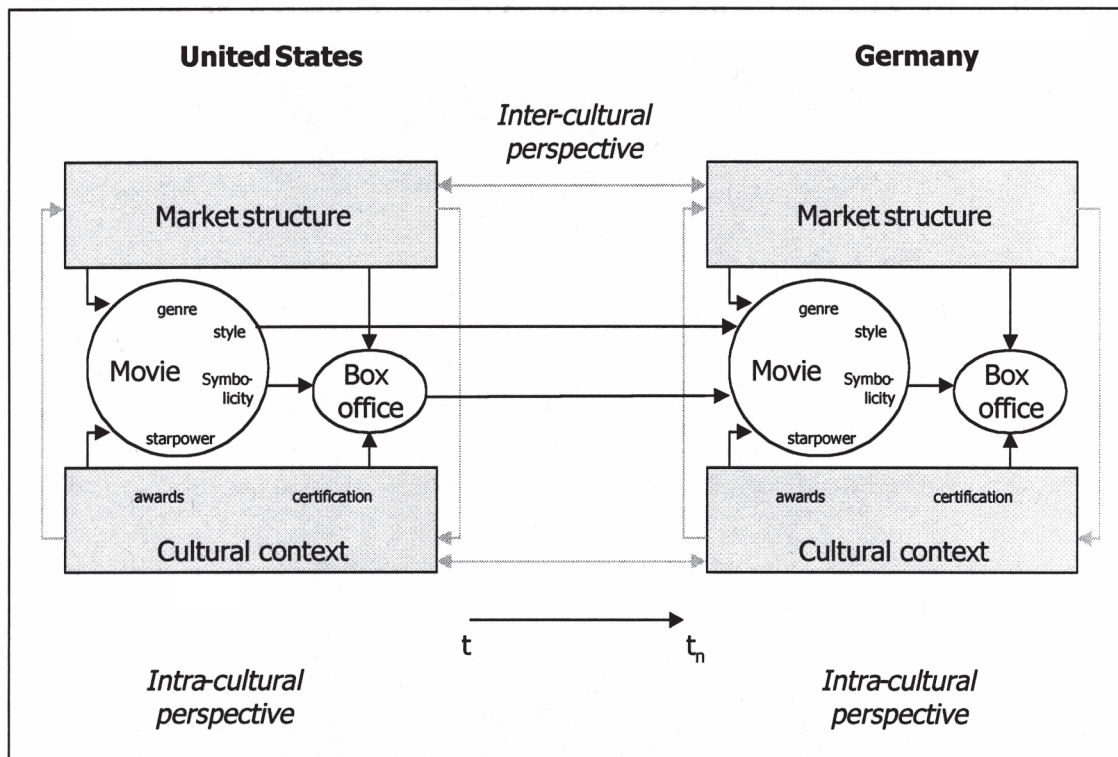
The *horizontal relations* within the model are centered on the bilateral media flow (Jensen 2002) and incorporate primarily the export of domestic movies into a foreign market (here: Germany). While interactions exist between the domestic and foreign market context (e.g., through international distributors) as well as between the domestic and foreign cultural context (e.g., through media), a movie's perception by foreign-country consumers is not only influenced by the movie itself and the respective foreign country's market and culture, but also by the movie's success in its home country (De Vany and Walls 2003).

Propositions for Cross-National Differences of Movie Characteristics on Box Office

Movie Genre. Genre has been empirically demonstrated to impact the North American box office (e.g., De Silva 1998; Prag and Casavant 1994). In these authors' view, the term "genre" requires no definition because it summarizes in a common-sensical way "movie attributes" (Neelamegham and Chintagunta 1991, p. 115) or "specific movie characteristics" (Jedidi, Krider and Weinberg 1998, p. 393). However, such a perspective overlooks that genres are not objective, timeless dimensions of a movie but dynamic, modifiable "envelopes" for a movie. Miller et al. (2001, p. 95) define a genre as a "cultural referencing system that provides pleasures for filmgoers as well as pre-sold forms for risk-averse industries". In this view the cultural and marketing perspective reconcile in the similar idea of genre as a concept connecting the production and consumption of movies, constituting "a kind of

¹For example, Roman Polanski's movie PIRATES collected \$5.8 million at the German box office, while the US box office was below \$1 million.

FIGURE 1
A Conceptual Framework on Exporting American Movies to Germany



'contract' between the media industry and its audiences" (Larsen 2002, p. 132). Based on our conceptual framework, we assume that a difference in a movie's box office success between the domestic and foreign-country market indicates a differing resonance between the marketed movie and the domestic/foreign cultural reference system. Differences are argued to exist for family-oriented movies, thrillers, and comedies.

Family-oriented movies. Considering the vertical direction of the framework, family-oriented movies have the potential to utilize the rich cultural referencing system of family related issues and values in the US. Despite the fact that the traditional family is undergoing dramatic changes in the US (Skolnick and Skolnick 2003), with new forms of family such as cohabiting couples, same-sex couples, single-parent families, and binuclear families emerging, the cultural norm of a traditional family figures large in the American public discourse. Consequently, movies with a "positive" family representation are especially recommended for family viewing.² This discussion is an indicator of a strong American cultural referencing system in regard of family-oriented movies. On the other hand, while the changing status of families is also discussed in Germany, the traditional family plays a less important role in the public discourse here (Schneider 1999; Leggewie 2001). Schneider (1999) found that "[c]ompared to North Americans, German males and females showed less appreciation for identities with family denotation and identities with religious or authoritative denotation". This leads to the expectation that family-oriented movies are more successful in the US than in Germany.

Thrillers. Movies referred to as thrillers share the narrative logic of surprise, suspense, and the name-giving thrills. Thrillers are organized around the central personae of victim, culprit/criminal and official or unofficial agents of law, order and justice (Derry 1988). On a very abstract level they incorporate a universal formula of a confrontation between good and evil. However, film research shows that the specific treatment has been closely related to the social, economic and political circumstances of the US (e.g., Leitch 2002). This is exemplified in the Depression and Prohibition era Gangster movie, as well as the conspiracy, political thrillers of the late 70s, early 80s. It has also been argued that the normative positioning of the criminal and/or avenger resonates specifically with the American public discourse or sentiments (Mandel 1984; Raeburn 1988). In the German culture, with a different law system and far less gun-related crimes, other referencing systems will be relevant. As thrillers require moviegoers to utilize a certain intertextual knowledge, including the American context as well as the specific genre conventions, thrillers are more likely to be successful in the US than in Germany.

Comedies. There are studies to suggest that the concept of humor varies between cultures, for example, the degree of humor used in advertisements and forms of humor such as sarcasm, irony, slapstick, ridicule, and situational humor (e.g., Zandpour, Chang, and Catalano 1992; Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet 1992). Palmer (1995) points out that laughter and humor require a certain situation of incongruity that is always historically and culturally local. It might imply a disregard of customs, social rules and norms and a situational knowledge of the appropriate and socially expected behavior. This refers to the nonverbal as well as verbal humor. Especially verbal humor is an important barrier for the successful export of comedies. Since in Germany the vast majority of movies screened in theaters are dubbed, it is likely that such dubbing reduces a movie's level of humor and, consequently, its attractive-

²See for instance the American religious organization Dove Foundation that awards a label for "family-friendly" movies and even sells Hollywood movies in "family-edited" video versions.

ness to movie audiences. Accordingly, American movie comedies which refer to the specific American cultural referencing system of humor and are shown in a dubbed format can be expected to perform less successful in Germany than in the US. This leads us to our first proposition:

P1: The success of US movies differs between the US and Germany due to certain genres, with family-oriented movies, thrillers, and comedies being less successful in Germany.

Movie Style. A second concept that can be expected to account for differences between US and German movie success is *movie style*. In the last several decades, the American movie industry has developed a distinct way of dramatizing and visualizing stories, which is sometimes referred to as “Hollywood style.” This specific aesthetic and narrative style differs from European kinds of story telling as well as from Asian stylistic movie patterns: “Hollywood movies move; European ones linger; Asian ones sit and contemplate” (see Miller et al. 2001, p. 98). For example, European films tend to be wordier and contain less visual dynamics as well as no or only few special effects. Although German consumers have learned to interpret the codes of the “Hollywood style” (Putnam 1998), a movie still has to have the ability to connect with the localized German cultural referencing system. Motion pictures that draw extensively on the stylistic concept of “Hollywood style” (e.g., strong use of special effects, stars, linear narration and happy end) have to be highly standardized so that they are less open to specific elements of the German cultural system. Consequently, movies with a high level of “Hollywood style” will be more successful in the US than in Germany. Therefore,

P2: The success of US movies differs between the US and Germany depending on the movie's style, with movies having a high degree of “Hollywood style” being less successful in Germany.

Movie Symbolicity. Differences between movies' US and German box office success can also be explained by the concept of *symbolicity*. Symbolicity refers to a media product's potential to be categorized by consumers into existing positive cognitive categories (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2001). Symbolicity has been proposed or empirically shown to impact US box office significantly in the case of sequels, remakes, adaptations of TV series, among others, with movie sequels exerting an especially high impact (Simonet 1987; Ravid 1999).

Symbolicity can be interpreted as a specific form of intertextuality. In an ontological sense, the concept of intertextuality refers to the idea that the reception of one text cannot be conceptualized as an isolated process as there has to be a pre-existing knowledge of a cultural text pool that can be applied to understand a new text. Symbolicity takes the perspective of the producing company in the movie context (i.e., the “author”), which, in order to “pre-sell” a movie, tries to promote a movie with references that are known to the target audience. Here it is assumed that an American movie with a high level of symbolism, as it is especially present in the case of movie sequels, will try to primarily capitalize on an existing American symbolic value. This means that the probability for a resonance with the American culture is higher than for the German culture. Therefore, we expect that US-produced movies with a high degree of symbolism (i.e., sequels) to perform more successful in the US than in Germany. This reasoning leads to the following proposition:

P3: The success of US movies differs between the US and Germany depending on a movie's level of symbolism, with sequels performing superior at the box-office in the US than in Germany.

Starpower. Finally, movie stars are also expected to account for differences in US and German box office. From the cultural point of view, stars create a certain set of audience expectations based on prior textual experiences. In this sense Albert (1998, p. 225) remarks, that “stars can mark a particular film type”. Evidence for a positive impact of “starpower” on the North American box office has been demonstrated by several authors (e.g., Sawhney and Eliashberg 1996), although others have questioned the strength of this impact (e.g., Ravid 1999). While Hollywood stars are international stars, being well known and appreciated in most parts of the world, their media coverage differs between their home country and foreign countries such as Germany. Specifically, there are disproportionately more TV shows and special magazines featuring Hollywood stars in the US than in Germany, which is at least partially stimulated by the stars' local presence. This media coverage enriches the star-related cultural system in the US, providing a wider range of intertextual references for stars that can be utilized by both movie promoters and movie audiences to make sense of a certain new movie starring these actors. In addition, the fact that American movie stars themselves have been socialized within the US culture increases the cultural similarity between these stars and their audiences. This similarity fosters the star-audience relationship and adds to the expected stronger impact of American stars on US than German moviegoers' behavior. Therefore:

P4: The success of US movies differs between the US and Germany depending on a movie's level of starpower, with starpower having a stronger impact on box-office performance in the US than in Germany.

Propositions for Cross-National Differences of External Factors' Impact on Box Office

Domestic Success. When a US motion picture is released in Germany, information on the movie's prior success in the US market is regularly widely available through advertising and neutral media, such as newspapers and television. For example, the German magazine “Der Spiegel” comments the latest US box-office figures on its website weekly. Such information, which cannot be available to moviegoers in the US before a film has been released, can be expected to serve as an important choice criterion for foreign moviegoers when deciding which movie to attend (Elberse and Eliashberg 2002). Specifically, a film's US success (and the underlying “buying decision” of the US audience) is interpreted as a quality signal by German moviegoers. Hence, a film being successful in US theaters is expected to deliver superior quality compared to an unsuccessful movie. Moreover, according to the “success-breeds-success” principle, moviegoers climb on the bandwagon for its own sake, i.e., preferring successful movies over unsuccessful ones, with their decisions being largely independent of quality matters (Elberse and Eliashberg 2002), or as Danan (1995, p. 132) notes, “[c]ontemporary international audiences are plugged into what's hot on American marquee”. The latter effect is amplified by the disproportionate budget allocation of German distributors, who put an emphasis on films that have been successful in the US. Thus, we propose that:

P5: The success of US movies in Germany depends on the movie's US box office success, with movies performing

successfully at the US box office being also successful in Germany.

Awards. Awards, such as the prominent AMPAS Academy Awards, are given to movies in the year following their domestic theatrical release (Nelson et al. 2001). Thus, their impact on US moviegoers tends to be, although significant, limited to theatrical re-releases of award-winning movies and the latter's video exploitation (Dodds and Holbrook 1988). However, as US motion pictures regularly open in Germany with a time lag, information on award nominations and winners are often available during a movie's initial German theatrical release. We offer the following proposition:

P6: The success of US movies in Germany depends on the movie's award nominations and winners, with movies being nominated and/or winners performing better in Germany than in the US.

Certifications. Finally, the varying certification procedures in both countries can also be expected to account for differences in box-office success. In the US, the certifications given by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) are reported to have a significant impact on the box office of movies in the US, with restrictive ratings such as "R" serving as barriers for parts of the audience to attend a movie and therefore limit their success potential (Prag and Casavant 1994). As ratings express a culture's attitude toward movie elements such as violence and sexuality, movies can be rated differently in countries such as Germany and the US. In the case a movie is rated differently, the target audience might be restricted from attending the movies to a differing extent. Consequently, a movie rated more restrictive in the US than in Germany is expected to perform more successful in Germany, where fewer people are restricted from attending the movie. Vice versa, a movie rated less restrictive in the US than in Germany will probably be more successful in the US. Therefore, we propose that:

P7: The success of US movies in Germany depends on the movie's certification in both countries, with films having a more restrictive rating in Germany performing less successful in Germany and films with less restrictive German ratings being more successful in Germany.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to explore differences in the factors that determine the success of a movie that is sequentially released in the US and Germany. Our research contributes to a more sophisticated understanding of movie success factors in an inter-cultural context and builds on previous work, which has focused on the US movie market. Propositions were developed on how those factors affect the box office in both countries. We argue that there is an interaction effect between movies and cultures that has an impact on movies success. Insofar this research may help film studios to target their international audiences more effectively, especially by giving heed to different movie characteristics and cultural factors.

From a research perspective, our study could help developing methodologies and approaches to better understand the impact of culture on the overseas success of US movies. Because the proposed framework distinguishes between an inter- and intra-cultural perspective, the hypothesized framework offers a fine-grained understanding of interrelated mechanisms. Our primary contribution to theory lies in developing a model of movie success in an

inter-cultural context. It is hoped that our proposed model will trigger some interesting future research. Naturally, the most powerful research addition would be an empirical test of our propositions. For some factors of the model, it is possible to draw on existing measures used in earlier studies. Other measures could be constructed with data from different sources. Table 1 lists those measures which are found to be most relevant for empirically testing the conceptual model presented in this paper.

Our study also has implications for future research in terms of examining movie success in a cross-cultural context. The advent of global markets and marketing movies across national boundaries require companies to become familiar with relevant moviegoers' behavior in different culture. Once empirically corroborated, the framework could be used to forecast the acceptance of a new motion picture in Germany even before the production stage of motion picture management. Gathering similar information for other important foreign markets can contribute to a global early warning system which may help Hollywood studios to reduce the dangers of economic failures of future movies outside the US market. To understand the effects of culture on movie consumption, it may be important to examine other factors than those considered in our framework.

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TABLE 1
Existing Relevant Measures

<i>Variable</i>		<i>Description of measure</i>	<i>Data source</i>
Movie Success	US box office	The overall theatrical box-office generated by a movie during its US release	Internet Movie Database (imbd.com)
	German box office	The overall theatrical box-office generated by a movie during its German release	Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA)
Movie-Inherent Factors	Movie genres and themes	(a) Genre assignments by imdb.com can be taken as nominal genre variables. (b) The degree of family appeal, sexual-erotic themes, romance, suspense, and humor as movie themes can each measured on 10-point rating scales. Assessments on each element can be made by movie experts of the motion-picture information service Reel.com	imbd.com, Reel.co
	Movie style	The movies' degree of "Hollywood style", can be included as assessments from Reel.com experts.	Reel.com
	Movie symbolism	For sequel, remake, and films being based on a TV series, nominal variables can be constructed (e.g., sequel/no sequel). In the case of sequels and remakes, the absolute US and German box office of the respective predecessor was used as an indicator	imbd.com
	Starpower	The Hollywood Reporter's Star Power® measure can be used. The measure contains a starpower assessment by branch insiders which indicates the respective star's impact on the US box office.	The Hollywood Reporter
External Factors	Previous success	See description of US box office gathering above	imdb.com
	Awards	A scoring model can be developed to address the different categories of Academy Awards adequately when transferring the number of awards and nominations into a single scale value. For example, 50 points could be attributed to a Best Picture Academy Award, 25 points for each Best Actor, Best Actress and Best Director award, and 10 points could be given for each remaining award category.	AMPAS
	Timing	For each film, its' theatrical release dates in the US and Germany can be recorded and a difference score measuring the weeks between the two time points calculated	imbd.com
	Certifications	US: MPAA ratings could be used to measure movies', with G, PG, PG-13, and R ratings each being treated as nominal variables. Germany: FSK movie ratings can be used in a similar way, adding nominal variables for each of the rating categories ("general access", "6", "12", "16", "18") to the database	MPA, FSK

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Advertiser Portrayal of Consumer Time in the Late 20th Century U.S.: An Update

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ABSTRACT

The study extends previous work by Gross and Sheth (1989), providing evidence of continued U.S. advertiser emphasis on time-oriented advertising appeals. Additionally, the specific character of time-oriented appeals has changed consistent with recent societal developments. In addition to themes such as “fast to use,” “saves time,” “portrays the consumer as busy,” and “specifies amount of time required,” recent advertising sometimes attempts to reflect consumer desire to achieve “balanced use of time” and “reprieve from a time-oriented lifestyle.”

Gross and Sheth (1989) examined advertising appearing in the *Ladies' Home Journal (LHJ)* magazine over a roughly 100-year period from 1890 and 1988. Consistent with the notion that industrialization is associated with time pressures, perceived time scarcity, and concern about precise measurement and efficient use of time (Lewis and Weigert, 1981; Zerubavel, 1982), they found increasing advertiser emphasis on time-related concerns and product benefits. They also found the characteristics of time-oriented advertising to vary over the decades, reflecting corollary societal values and trends.

Advertising both reflects and influences societal values (Fox, 1990; Pollay, 1984, 1986). As observed by Pollay (1985, p. 24), one role of advertising is to articulate the “rationale for consumption.” The present study updates Gross and Sheth’s (1989) analysis, warranted because consumer and societal developments since the mid-1980s have led to probable further evolution of consumers’ time-oriented concerns. As advertisers perceive changes in both general and specific concerns with time, it is expected they will reflect them in advertising appeals.

Four developments that might lead to changing consumer concerns are discussed in the following section. The list is not represented as exhaustive and the section is not represented as presenting formal hypotheses to be tested. Rather, the discussion merely presents *a priori* observations and propositions giving rise to the current study.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND RELATED PROPOSITIONS

Slowed Growth of Women’s Workforce Participation

Gross and Sheth (1989) observed that, as compared with earlier decades, ads appearing in the *LHJ* during the 1960s and 1970s showed pronounced emphasis on the ability of products to enhance time productivity. Women, and particularly married women with young children, entered the U.S. workforce in unprecedented numbers (Hayghe, 1990, 1997; Hayghe and Bianchi, 1994). Society felt the shock of women taking on new roles and aspiring to new statuses while also attempting to maintain traditional homemaker roles. Advertisers emphasized that products could relieve working wives’ busy schedules. This was consistent with economic views of time emphasizing the substitution of goods for time spent in housework (Becker 1965). Numerous researchers investigated the effects of changing women’s roles on the consumption of convenience products (e.g., Nickols and Fox, 1983; Reilly, 1982).

During subsequent decades it became the norm for wives and mothers to be employed (Fullerton, 1999; U.S. Department of Labor, 1999, 2000). Family structures and roles evolved in support of this expectation (Robinson and Godbey, 1997). By the 1980s,

segments of the female population most likely to join the workforce had largely done so, and so growth in women’s labor force participation slowed (Hayghe, 1997). Though working women still felt time-pressured, society became more accustomed to the demands of juggling work and family. What were previously experienced as new time pressures became expected. Convenience products were used routinely, and less perceived as representing fresh solutions to family time pressures.

Gross and Sheth observed in their analysis of early-1980s advertising what may have been the beginning of advertisers placing less emphasis on products as time-saving solutions for the new female workforce. Whereas earlier advertising had explicitly “sold” consumers on the necessity of using time-saving products, often providing a fully articulated rationale, the tone of 1980s time-oriented ads implied that consumers had already integrated time-saving products into their lives. The expectation that this trend should continue gives rise to Proposition 1.

Proposition 1: Advertisers will de-emphasize explicit rationalization of time-saving product benefits, particularly as they pertain to pressures faced by working wives.

Widespread Acceptance of Convenience-Oriented Products

One purpose of advertising is to articulate the rationale for consumption (Pollay 1985). Thus, as new time- and labor-saving products were introduced over the past century, advertisers explicitly urged readers that the use of these products could improve their lives. Gross and Sheth (1989) observed that ads accompanying the introduction of vacuums, washing machines, prepared foods, and the like typically emphasized time savings as the most salient product benefit. Sometimes the desire to save time was seen as controversial, and advertisers promoting what amounted to a lifestyle change no doubt felt challenged to convince consumers of the acceptability of using products to save time. For example, convenience foods initially met with resistance as consumers associated their use with laziness (Haire, 1950).

In contrast, consumers today readily accept and use a wide array of convenience-oriented products (Berry, 1990). Consumers buy them *specifically* because they are fast to use. Thus, other appeals (e.g., health and taste in the case of convenience foods, efficacy in the case of appliances) may now be more salient than time in differentiating these products. These observations give rise to Proposition 2.

Proposition 2: With saving time now an accepted and well-understood benefit, advertisers will emphasize other benefits even when promoting products perceived and traditionally advertised as time-saving.

Post-Industrial Society

The time period covered by Gross and Sheth’s analysis was one in which the U.S. experienced a rather gradual transformation from an agrarian and largely rural economy to an advanced industrial and urbanized society. By contrast, the 1980s and 1990s saw a comparatively sudden transformation from a U.S. economy dependent on manufacturing to one variously called an information-, service-, or post-industrial economy. It is said the U.S. experienced a technological and information revolution akin to, but more accelerated than, the earlier industrial revolution. Foreseeing

the coming of a post-industrial economy, social commentators such as Bell (1973) and Toffler (1980) predicted less dependence on the precise accounting of time so necessary in a manufacturing economy. As such, they predicted consumers would enjoy a return to more personal discretion over time.

To some degree and for some consumers this prediction has come to pass. However, consumers generally report feeling no less time pressured. Recent polls (e.g., Roper Center, 1998) consistently report a sizable percentage responding that time pressure is getting worse. Consumers have also acquired a new time-oriented vocabulary indicating a new type of, and perhaps even heightened, time sensitivity. Terms such as “multitasking” and “24-7” suggest not a lessening of perceived time pressure, but rather possibly time pressure of a different type. Consumers increasingly blur the distinctions between personal and work time (Oechsle and Geissler, 2003). It might be argued consumers are adjusting to a new and perhaps uncomfortable time reckoning based on polychronicity (combining activities simultaneously, and possibly blurring the distinctions between work and discretionary time) as compared with monochronic time reckoning (doing one thing at a time and dividing time into discrete units) that has traditionally characterized industrialized societies (Graham, 1981; Kaufman et al., 1991). Various authors have suggested that today’s consumers feel *more* pressured due to a sense of time fragmentation and inability to immerse oneself in just one activity (e.g., Robinson and Godbey, 1997). These trends give rise to expectations associated with Proposition 3.

Proposition 3: Advertisers expressing empathy with consumers’ time concerns will increasingly reflect concerns associated with the post-industrial society (e.g., desires for leisure time distinct from work time, and pressures associated with multitasking or polychronicity).

Living in the Present and Desire for Balanced Use of Time

Popular media suggest that, as compared with the past, consumers today express a greater longing for balanced and present-oriented lives. This may be in reaction to earlier forces that rendered the U.S. time-oriented. For example, as compared with older cohorts, Generation X has been observed to be less willing to sacrifice current family and personal pursuits for the sake of longer-term career aspirations (Ritchie, 1995). Working mothers have largely abandoned the so-called “superwoman myth,” and expect to re-balance priorities as they pass through various life stages. Fathers express the desire to nurture as well as provide economically for their families. Regular columns on “Work and Family” in the *Wall Street Journal* (Schellenbarger, 1999) focus on the desire of even hard-driving professionals to establish balance between career, family, and personal pursuits; and report that many say they would choose more free time over money.

The orientation toward living a balanced and present-oriented life was not discussed in Gross and Sheth’s (1989) analysis of time-oriented ads. However, it is readily seen in ads today. For example, a recent real estate ad stated, “The rest of your life isn’t somewhere in the future. Or what remains after you’ve worked your heart out. It’s a part of every day if you strike the right balance.” This apparent emphasis on balance gives rise to Proposition 4.

Proposition 4: Advertisers will increasingly appeal to consumers’ desires for balanced time use, focusing on making time available for personal pursuits; and products will increasingly be promoted as enhancing scarce leisure time.

RESEARCH METHOD

Prior to embarking on the current study, a pilot study was conducted in which ads from recent issues of general interest and women’s magazines were analyzed. Of 589 ads analyzed, 122 (21%) were judged to be time-oriented. The pilot study confirmed that time-oriented advertising is still prevalent. Further, all coding categories used by Gross and Sheth were observed. The results of the pilot study, coupled with observations discussed in the previous section, led to the development of additional coding categories.

Because the purpose was to extend Gross and Sheth’s (1989) analysis, the present study used similar methodology. As in their investigation, the current study analyzed advertising appearing in the *LHJ*. Gross and Sheth explained their rationale for choosing magazine advertising in general (based on content characteristics and accessibility) and *LHJ* advertising in particular (based on the magazine’s prominence, audience characteristics, editorial and audience stability, and history of use in documenting social and marketing trends). They noted in 1989 that *LHJ* had ranked among the top ten circulated magazines since its inception. According to Magazine Publishers of America, it was ranked ninth in 1998. The magazine’s target audience and editorial emphasis have remained stable, with focus on the practical work- and family-oriented pursuits of American women.

Gross and Sheth analyzed advertising appearing over ten decades from 1883 to 1988, and examined three issues per decade. As shown in Table 1, the current investigation began with 1986 issues and continued through 2000, thus overlapping slightly with the previous analysis. Three to six randomly selected issues were sampled during each even-numbered year, allowing analysis of at minimum 300 ads per sampled year. In total, 31 issues and 3,012 ads were analyzed. All ads one-fourth page or larger were studied. Each was examined first to determine if it reflected an orientation toward time. Ads containing no time-oriented elements were simply tallied and received no further analysis. Roughly 19 percent (561 ads) were judged to contain time-oriented elements and were subjected to further analysis.

Each ad was examined to determine if it used time as a primary appeal. Time-oriented elements were judged to be primary if headlined, listed first and with prominence, presented in larger/bolder type, illustrated through photograph or drawing, afforded a substantial proportion of copy, and/or otherwise emphasized as prominent. Two or more appeals could be judged to be primary when they received relatively equal emphasis (e.g., quick and delicious). Thus, to be coded as primary, an ad did not have to use time as *the* primary appeal, but only as *a* primary appeal. Time-oriented appeals were considered secondary in the absence of such observations (e.g., when merely included as one of several appeals in the fine print). A few ads were judged to use time-oriented appeals in only a tertiary manner.

Following the coding of each time-oriented ad as primary, secondary, or tertiary, ads were further coded based on categories of appeal. The following categories developed by Gross and Sheth (1989, p. 78) were used as *a priori* categories:

- Presents the advertised product as *fast to use*.
- Presents the advertised product as a means of *saving time*.
- Presents the *consumer as busy* and as regarding *time as scarce/valuable*.
- Specifies the *amount of time* required to use the product.
- Presents the product as a means of making *double use of time*.
- Presents the product as a means of *escaping a typically time-oriented lifestyle*.

TABLE 1
Proportion of Ads Containing Time-Oriented Appeals
(Sampled Issues 1986-2000)

Year	Number of Issues Sampled	Number of Ads Analyzed	% Containing Time-Oriented Appeal(s)	% of Time-Oriented Ads Using a Time-Oriented Appeal as Primary
1986	3	348	18.4%	45.3%
1988	3	345	17.4	51.7
1990	5	469	16.2	57.9
1992	3	362	13.8	44.0
1994	4	362	16.9	52.5
1996	4	341	21.1	45.8
1998	3	315	21.6	52.9
1999-2000	6	470	23.4	54.5
Total		3,012		

TABLE 2
Proportion of Time-Oriented Ads Using Each Coded Category of Appeal

Category	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	1999-2000
Fast to use	58%	58%	78%	70%	75%	44%	54%	48%
Saves time	20	23	28	24	49	24	27	17
Presents consumer as busy	19	27	13	26	31	19	31	26
Specifies amount of time required	23	17	38	30	53	33	24	22
Double use of time	2	2	1	2	3	6	3	2
Escape time-oriented lifestyle	5	0	5	2	5	11	9	16
Desire for balance	0	3	4	8	7	6	16	22
Value scarce leisure time	5	7	5	2	10	10	15	17
Control over time	6	7	11	2	10	3	7	10
Immediate/timely results	28	30	20	12	8	15	19	18

Additionally, four new categories were identified. The first three were informed by the observations discussed at the beginning of this paper and were observed during the pilot study. The fourth was observed in the pilot study and believed to reflect a time benefit/concern not specifically addressed by the other categories.

- Represents a desire to achieve *balance between work and non-work pursuits* (i.e., leisure, time for self and personal interests, time for family and relationships).
- Represents a high *value* placed on scarce *leisure* time.
- Presents benefits related to consumers' desires for *control over time*.
- Presents the product as providing *immediate or timely results*.

Coding was conducted by the author and by a trained but independent judge (the same methodology used by Gross and Sheth). Few disagreements occurred between coders, and all were resolved through discussion. The author also replicated the coding a few weeks following the initial analysis to ensure test-retest reliability. Reliability rates were slightly lower than those reported by Gross and Sheth, but all were greater than the 85 percent and most exceeded 90 percent.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the proportion of ads from each sampled year judged to contain time-oriented appeals. The proportions from 1986 and 1988 (18% and 17%, respectively) are comparable with those reported by Gross and Sheth for the late-1980s. During the early- to mid-1990s, the proportions declined somewhat, ranging from roughly 14 to 17 percent. This is consistent with the observations leading to Propositions 1 and 2. The proportions were greatest during the late-1990s, ranging from roughly 21 to 23 percent. Table 1 also shows the proportion of time-oriented ads using time as a primary appeal (roughly 45 to 55 percent) to be consistent with the high proportions found during the final years of the Gross and Sheth analysis.

Gross and Sheth (1989) observed that a wider range of time-oriented appeals was employed during the latter decades of their sample. The current analysis similarly found a wide range of appeals. The proportions of time-oriented ads using each category of appeal are presented in Table 2. Most notable, and consistent with Propositions 3 and 4, is the increased use of appeals coded as "desire for balance," "escape time-oriented lifestyle," and "value scarce leisure time." The appeals "fast to use," "saves time," and "amount of time," were used with most frequency during the early- to mid-1990s. Though no numerical trend is evident for the cat-

egory “presents the consumer as busy,” qualitative differences regarding this appeal are substantial and consistent with observations leading to Propositions 1 and 2. This is discussed in the following section. The nature of ads reflecting the categories “double use of time,” “immediate/timely results,” and “control over time” are also discussed.

DISCUSSION AND QUALITATIVE OBSERVATIONS

The 1980s

Gross and Sheth (1989, p. 81) observed that, in comparison with advertising from earlier decades, advertising during the 1980s:

... largely implies that consumers *expect* products to facilitate time savings and need not justify this expectation. Time-oriented concerns and benefits are communicated with unprecedented simplicity, suggesting time-orientation is a well-understood value.

Comparing ads from the 1980s sample with later ads, the trend toward simpler communication of time-oriented appeals appears to have continued. By later standards, even late-1980s advertising appeared copy-heavy. As compared with the more minimalist style evidenced in recent advertising, ads from this period contained more explicitly rationalized time-related claims.

As in the Gross and Sheth sample, a large proportion of ads from the 1980s presented the sponsors’ products as “fast to use.” For example, the Dirt Devil vacuum was promoted as allowing “quick clean-ups,” and Hershey’s chocolate advertised “quick and easy recipes.” Ads frequently made reference to “saving time.” Hunt’s canned sauces advertised, “all pre-simmered to save you cooking time.” Some ads implied that products saved time because they were “the fastest” or “faster” than other alternatives. For example, Hormel canned chili claimed “quicker to fix than a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.”

A large number of ads specified the short amount of time required to use the product. Stove Top stuffing, for example, advertised “ready in just 15 minutes.” Often the amount of time was headlined or featured as part of a time-saving recipe. Advertising for personal care products frequently specified an amount of time (e.g., Epilady promised smooth hair-free legs in “only a minute or two”). Many advertisers capitalized on time benefits associated with the microwave oven. Whirlpool offered the TimeMaster “because we know the value of your time;” and Pillsbury advertised “just 7 minutes in your microwave.”

Particularly prominent in the late-1980s were appeals to working women as being busy and as regarding time as scarce and valuable. For example, Legg’s hosiery was advertised as for “non-stop legs”... “throughout your hectic day.” This type of appeal was also sometimes communicated through testimonial. Advertising for Lightdays pantliners and ExLax laxatives featured working women discussing their busy lives.

Ads often appealed to the competing demands on women’s time. An ad for the Correctol laxative stated, “A woman’s day never seems to stop. Between family and work, time’s just not her own.” Nivea face cream stated, “You work hard at work, you work hard at home. You’re under a lot of pressure.” Ads also referred to busy families. Rubbermaid advertised its cookware as “perfect for families on the go,” and Black & Decker advertised the company’s small kitchen appliances by featuring a family “too busy for breakfast.”

Though more prevalent in more recent years, a few 1980s ads promoted products as providing control over time by allowing flexibility in scheduling. The Roto Rooter plumbing service adver-

tised “any time ... 24-hour service;” and Black & Decker promised “coffee’s ready when you are. Just set the 24-hour timer.” A few products promised consumers “double use of time.” The Black & Decker cordless can-opener was promoted as “leaving hands free to do other things around the kitchen.”

Perhaps appealing to demands for immediate gratification, many cosmetics and personal care products promised immediate or at least timely results. Revlon introduced a skin-care product as “the 10-day turnaround,” with results “ten days from today.” Coty introduced Overnight Success, pledging improved skin “in just three nights.” Weight loss products made similar claims; and over-the-counter medications emphasized that busy women need “fast relief.”

Finally, a few advertisers offered products as means to temporarily “escape a time-oriented lifestyle.” Royal Caribbean cruise lines enticed, “You can leave the pressure behind, and renew the energies sapped by all those years of full-speed-ahead.” As precursor to advertising themes more prevalent in the late-1990s, Parliament cigarettes were advertised as “the perfect recess ... a break from activity for rest and relaxation.”

The Early-1990s (1990-1994)

As compared with the majority of decades examined by Gross and Sheth, the early 1990s saw time-oriented appeals used with relatively high frequency. However, as shown in Table 1, the overall rate was lower than during the late-1980s. This is consistent with Proposition 1, which anticipated that explicit rationalization of time benefits might be de-emphasized as women’s workforce participation became routine and commonplace. It is also consistent with Proposition 2. The study found that convenience-food ads appearing during the early 1990s frequently omitted time-oriented claims or made them secondary in emphasis to such benefits as health, taste, and ease of preparation.

As shown in Table 2, all categories of appeal observed in 1980s ads were also observed in early-1990s ads. However, they occurred in different proportions and with different qualitative emphasis. Simple claims promoting products as “fast to use” were most prevalent. From 1990 through 1994, a substantial 70 to 78 percent of sampled time-oriented ads included this claim. For example, Del Monte canned fruits advertised “think quick, think delicious;” and Fantastik household cleaner promised a “quick fix,” making “short work [of] hardcore messes.”

Many ads promising time saved also specified the “amount of time required.” Food advertisers very frequently included this appeal. For example, Hormel advertised “heats in two minutes so you can put your favorite dish on the table in record time,” and Betty Crocker advertised “non-stop from simmer to sensational ... [ready] in 15 minutes.” Non-food product advertisers used it too. Johnson & Johnson introduced a home cholesterol test requiring “only 15 minutes;” and Quick Lube offered car service in “29 minutes guaranteed.”

Sometimes the benefit of saving time was communicated by drawing relatively subtle comparisons with alternative brands. Bounty adopted the now long-running slogan “the quicker picker upper.” Others made more direct claims. Swift headlined “If you have to wait around for the great taste of sausage, you bought the wrong sausage.” Some food ads emphasized that consumers can save time while appearing to have prepared a time-consuming dish. Ore-Ida claimed, “even though they look like you spent all day in the kitchen, you can prepare them fast, fast, fast.”

Most time-oriented food ads used simple claims as compared with those from the 1980s, often communicating “fast to use” and “time-saving” benefits by merely stating the required preparation time or by offering quick recipes. Quaker oatmeal straightfor-

wardly claimed “cooks in 1 minute;” and Tyson chicken featured recipes with such headlines as “From 0 to fajitas in 8 minutes flat.” Others merely presented recipes with “prep time” and “cook time” prominently featured in bolded and blocked print.

Advertisers during the early 1990s continued to emphasize that consumers were busy. However, the overall look and tone of such ads differed from those appearing in the 1980s. Substantially less copy was devoted to explaining *why* the consumer was busy, and ads contained fewer specific references to women in the workforce. Advertisers may have perceived that women had become accustomed to juggling work and family and so those pressures no longer needed to be described. For example, whereas 1980s ads for the Correctol laxative specifically delineated the various components of a busy woman’s life, in 1992 the company simply stated “with all the demands in a woman’s life.” Food advertisers often depicted consumers as too busy to cook but did so with little explanation. Campbell’s soups offered “recipes that fit your busy lifestyle,” and Quaker oatmeal headlined “for moms who have a lot of love but not a lot of time.”

A few ads depicted consumers as not only busy but as also desiring more balanced use of time. S&W advertised its canned vegetables and sauces with “quick” recipes for “when you have more to do than dinner.” The ad promised “will get you out of the kitchen and back to your family in less than 15 minutes.” A few offered temporary reprieve from a typically time-pressured lifestyle. An ad for the Jeep sport utility vehicle read “designed to leave the hassles and commitments of everyday life behind.”

Some advertisers emphasized control over time and its scheduling. First Response and Johnson & Johnson promoted the convenience of in-home medical tests by stressing that they require no pre-scheduled and time-consuming doctors’ office visits. Similarly, the discount store Kmart highlighted the convenience of consulting an in-store pharmacist “any time.” As compared with the 1980s sample, fewer early-1990s ads emphasized immediate or timely results. Particularly noticeable was the decreased emphasis among cosmetics and skin-care advertisers.

Late-1990s (1996-2000)

A marked change was observed in the most recent sample. Though “fast to use,” “saves time” and “amount of time” appeals continued to be popular, increased proportions also reflected a desire for balanced use of time, appreciation of scarce leisure time, and desire to escape a typically time-oriented life-style. Advertising more frequently articulated consumers’ desires for balance between time for work and personal pursuits. Some presented products as allowing the savoring of small increments of leisure time. These focuses are consistent with Propositions 3 and 4. Further, consistent with Propositions 1 and 2, time-concerns were presented with less explanation and rationalization, and some advertisers who earlier consistently addressed the time-concerns of busy working mothers (e.g., Hunts Manwich sauces) used time in only a portion of their ads.

In general, food advertisers in the late 1990s tended toward minimalist execution of time-oriented appeals. Consistent with Proposition 2, time appeals were frequently secondary to nutrition or taste appeals. Some ads simply featured large product photographs with short headlines such as “quick and hearty” and “immediate gratification.” Numerous food brands (e.g., Campbell’s, French’s, Eagle, Jell-O, Comstock, Baker’s) merely presented recipes with close-up photographs, headlines such as “quick dinner recipes,” and “prep/cook time” prominently featured.

As compared with the early-1990s sample, there was a noticeable increase in the number of personal care products using “fast to use,” “saves time,” and “amount of time” appeals. New formula-

tions were promoted as faster to apply or as saving time by allowing substitution of one product for two. A wide range of other product categories also emphasized speed and saving time. For example, Dryel home dry cleaning claimed to require “only 30 minutes.” Whirlpool advertised its clothes dryer by stating that “drying clothes is a job that’s never finished but now it can be an *easier, simpler, quicker* job that’s never finished.”

As in earlier periods, advertisers in the late-1990s offered time-saving tips for working mothers. However, there was a new emphasis on family members being self-reliant. An ad sponsored by America’s Dairy Farmers featured the headline “Uh-oh, mom’s working late. Cheese to the rescue,” implying dad and kids would prepare dinner. A few portrayed the busy woman juggling work and family demands. Schilling seasonings presented the scenario “Your client cut your deadline. At least dinner can go as planned . . . ready in just 25 minutes.” However, more often the ads did not specify *why* the consumer was busy. For example, Campbell’s soups asked, “only have a pinch of time?” without explaining why the consumer would be time pressured.

Ads from the late-1990s sometimes specifically articulated control over time as a benefit. The online health site, Selfcare.com, advertised, “because you can’t squeeze 30 minutes of questions into a 10-minute doctors visit.” The office supply store Office Depot highlighted products that “today’s busy woman needs,” emphasizing “24-hour ordering” and “everything you need, when you need it.” Several sampled ads offered consumers “double use of time” by freeing them from monitoring household tasks. Reynold’s cooking bags claimed “just put [dinner] in an oven bag and forget about it.” Whirlpool advertised “laundry is a fact of life, but it doesn’t have to *be* your life.” Sometimes the promotion of double use of time was accompanied by suggesting the product could provide the reprieve of a few moments leisure or some “balance” between work and personal time. An ad for the Whirlpool dishwasher pictured a woman relaxing in a bath, and read “virtually eliminates soaking . . . as for all that soaking, you might want to save it for yourself.”

As in earlier periods, ads from the late-1990s expressed empathy regarding time pressure and acknowledged that consumers regard time as scarce and valuable. Most used minimal copy to articulate the nature of consumers’ time pressures. Liz Claiborne clothing simply asked “A full day ahead? Are you dressed for it?” In contrast, several ads portraying consumers as busy were quite copy-heavy, suggesting a return to the practice of detailing the specific sources of time pressure. However, unlike the earlier ads, the more recent ads treated the topic with humor. While sensitive to time demands, the ads expressed a sense of amused resignation. As an example, the department store retailer J. C. Penney humorously asked:

“Can you type 60 words a minute, pay bills, fix a hangnail, call your best friend, finish an expense report, call your child’s teacher, organize your calendar, balance your checkbook, call your mother, fight with your mother, meditate, solve the dinner dilemma, pick up your husband’s dry cleaning, make hotel reservations, survive a step class, eat your tuna sandwich and repair a run in your hose during the 15 minutes you have for lunch?”

An ad for Wisk liquid detergent began “the 10 million thousand things we have to do everyday,” and listed roughly 150 humorously stated tasks, goals, and interruptions, including “make a list of a million other things to do.”

Many recent ads portraying the consumer as busy offered the advertised product as a brief reprieve from a typically time-pressed lifestyle, with leisure portrayed as an occasional “stolen” moment.

As shown in Table 2, an increased proportion of time-oriented advertising has used “escape” and “value scarce leisure time” appeals. Nips candies depicted a harried office worker juggling phones and a spewing fax with the headline, “Had enough? Have a Nips.” Nivea skin care products promised, “it makes a five-minute shower feel like a spa.” An ad for Coca Cola’s caffeine-free cola showed forsaken reading material next to a hammock and headlined “there are times you don’t want caffeine.”

Such appeals have also been combined with appeals to the “desire for balance” (see Table 2). While stressing that consumers are busy, ads encouraged readers to occasionally slow down. For example, an ad for Mattel Barbie Doll Collectibles read “You graduated at the top of your class, married . . . , had 2.3 children, and just made partner at the firm. . . . It’s time to play. Take a breath. Treat yourself.” An ad for General Foods International Coffees read, “It’s that moment when the world becomes still and the most pressing thing you have to do is nothing.” Ads for Maxwell House coffee read “Study a cloud. Finish a novel in one sitting;” and “Stay in the bath until your toes wrinkle. Finish the crossword puzzle.” Some advertisers simply expressed empathy. Lee jeans headlined “what women dream about,” indicating 82 percent dream about “more free time.” An L.L. Bean ad read, “To do: Throw out to do list.”

Similar to several ads sampled from the 1980s but nearly absent in the early-1990s sample, the late-1990s sample contained ads emphasizing the busy woman’s need to “keep going.” These ads usually also suggested the benefits “immediate results” and “control over time.” For example, Vicks cold medicine depicted women who had “worked nonstop all day,” and concluded “keeps on going so you can too.” Emphasis on “immediate/timely results” was also seen in ads for exercise and weight-loss products. Finally, though the proportions were lower than in the 1980s, the late-1990s sample included cosmetics and skin-care ads promising results in a specific amount of time.

CONCLUSION

This study extended prior work by Gross and Sheth (1989). The study analyzed advertising appearing from the mid-1980s through the year 2000. As such, it examined advertising produced during in a period during which women’s workforce participation became established as the norm, during which convenience-oriented products were broadly accepted and routinely used, and during which the U.S. was largely transformed from an industrial to a post-industrial economy. These factors, as well as observations regarding consumer desire for balanced time use, led to interest in an updated analysis of time-oriented advertising.

The present study found, first, that advertisers have continued to use time-oriented appeals, including, “fast to use,” “saves time,” and “amount of time” appeals. However, consistent with observations leading to Propositions 1 and 2, these appeals were often communicated more simply during later years, and they represented lesser proportions of time-oriented advertising. Advertisers also continued to portray busy and time-scarce lifestyles, often expressing empathy regarding consumer time pressure. However, consistent with Proposition 1, ads from the early-1990s made less explicit reference to the juggling of work and family than did those from the 1980s. Further, though the late-1990s sample showed a return to the practice of detailing the causes for consumer time pressure, the later ads treated the topic with humor.

Perhaps the most significant change was an enlarged emphasis on consumer desire to achieve balance in use of time. Recent ads reflected a sensibility toward living a balanced life involving time for self and personal relationships. Along with the focus on balance is an increased emphasis on the value placed on scarce leisure time.

Leisure was sometimes presented as only a brief and “stolen” respite, and products were advertised as allowing temporary reprieve from a typically time-pressured lifestyle. These changes are consistent with observations that led to Propositions 3 and 4.

This study represents an initial inquiry chronicling *observed* advertising appeals. In presenting these findings, the author does not intend to suggest that consumers necessarily perceived the meanings of the ads in the ways suggested by the study. The analysis is based on interpretations of meaning. Though coders interpreted the ads quite consistently, this does not mean that target audiences would necessarily do so. A promising area for future inquiry is to collect consumer interpretations of time-oriented ads.

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Does Crime Pay For Violent Program-Embedded Ads?

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at studying the impact of emotional context in television programs on ad memorization. Many experimental works show that affect is an important factor to be considered, so as to better understand both consumer behavior in general and memorization phenomena in particular. Here, we partially replicate Bushman and Bonacci's (2002) recent work and invalidate their main findings, namely that emotionally neutral TV programs entail better ad memorization and retention, whereas we confirm the major role of arousal on memory consolidation processes, by showing significantly higher memory scores for violent programs.

INTRODUCTION

A television commercial never appears alone. It is embedded in a specific program. The impact of television program context on commercial effectiveness in terms of brand recall, attitude toward the ad (Aad), attitude toward the brand (Ab) or purchase intention (PI), is a relatively old research topic, as about 20 years ago, Soldow and Principe (1981) wrote: "Research provides inconclusive findings regarding the relationship between liking a program and commercial effectiveness". Since then, several studies have been conducted, bringing sometimes, as we shall see, divergent results. A recent publication (Bushman and Bonacci, 2002) addresses the impact of violent programs on ad memory. In the advertising research field regarding the effects of program context on advertising effectiveness, the specific theme of violence is important because it has not been largely studied and it is frequently displayed on TV screens. Media responsibility is often evoked and a divide is perceptible between on the one hand, those who consider that media must be exonerated of any responsibility charge because they just relay or echo the actual surrounding violence which pervades society and those, on the other hand, who regard violence on TV as an aggravating factor. While media responsibility is debatable, the very presence of violence on television does not appear to be contested by anyone, as the violence index created by Gerbner proves it. This index, aimed at major networks, is calculated on a weekly basis of programming and published by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, since 1967. This quantitative index that allows international comparisons (the score was 130 for Canadian networks in 1994, vs. 169.5 for US networks) does take into account the number of violent acts but less easily assesses the magnitude or intensity of violence depicted in television shows. It nevertheless permits to state that violence pervades most TV shows (60% of aired programs contain scenes of violence; National Television Violence Study, 1997). Brand managers and advertising professionals must then question the influence of this type of program on advertising effectiveness, an issue that has been insufficiently addressed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Emotion

Emotional states have been the subject of a growing and constant attention for more than two decades in consumer behavior research. However, as some authors have pointed out (Luomala and Laaksonen, 2000), a clear consensus has not been found yet, as far as the terminology and the taxonomy of the emotional states are

concerned. We will use here primarily two terms pertaining to emotional states: mood and emotion. The former refers to "constantly evolving general affective states felt by the individuals", while the latter represents "specific affective responses prompted by particular [consumption] experiences". Thus, moods "describe milder, more diffuse feeling states that both color and reflect the overall pattern of ongoing activity", whereas "by contrast, emotions indicate more intense, object-specific feeling states that respond to particular [consumption] activities" (Holbrook and Gardner, 2000). As for taxonomy, two great postures coexist: the discrete or categorical approach (Izard, 1977; Ekman, 1994) which considers that there are basic emotions (the number of which varies according to the authors) and the multidimensional or composite approach (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974, 1977; Russell, 1979) which posits that an emotional state is the result of underlying dimensions. According to these latter authors, affect is composed of two (or maybe three) distinct and orthogonal dimensions: arousal or activation (A) and the hedonic valence or pleasure (P), to which the concept of dominance (D) is sometimes added, this latter being related to the level of free-will, free movement or control of close environment.

Emotion and memory

Many research studies have confirmed the role of emotion or mood on memory, both at encoding and retrieval stages. Most authors agree to acknowledge that emotional stimuli are better memorized than neutral ones (Revelle and Loftus, 1992; Hamann *et al.*, 1999; McGaugh, 2000), whereas some contend that a reversal is possible for very strong emotional stimuli, which are not met in the advertising realm anyway (Kroeber-Riel, 1979). Besides, Friestad and Thorson (1986) showed the positive effect of emotion on memory and judgement, particularly for individuals denoting a strong emotional intensity, as described elsewhere (i.e. affect intensity for Moore, Harris and Chen, 1994). Other studies consider emotion not as a discrete variable but as composed of distinct dimensions: pleasure, arousal and dominance. Some authors privileged valence (Berg and Lippman, 2001), while others focused on activation levels (Srull, 1987).

Valence and memory. Goldberg and Gorn (1987) stressed that "while the literature suggests that mood has an assimilative effect on a variety of attitudes and behaviors, the literature on the effects of mood on recall is more mixed." But Isen (1984) suggested that "a positive mood may increase the efficiency of information processing", while in marketing research, Lee and Sternthal (1999) demonstrated that a positive emotion (i.e. of positive valence) was likely to enhance encoding, leading consequently to a better retrieval (recall or recognition). Beauregard *et al.* (2000) state that valence would have an impact on retrieval (recognition, particularly). Congruence, i.e. the same affective tone between current mood and valence-laden stimulus, would also play a significant part in evaluations or judgments (Blaney, 1986).

Arousal and memory. For other investigators, the real crucial emotional dimension could actually be not the valence (pleasure-displeasure), but rather arousal or activation (Bradley *et al.*, 1992), either purely physiological or emotional (Phaf and Wolters, 1986; Katzen Perez *et al.*, 2001). Thus, Blake, Varnhagen and Parent (2001), showed that memory enhancement at encoding is related to emotional arousal and this, *independently* of the polarity of valence.

In a same manner, Singh and Churchill (1987) emphasized that several reviewed works induced the conclusion that stimuli producing high arousal levels were likely to be better remembered (Archer and Margolin 1970; Kaplan and Kaplan 1968).

Most of these studies, even those implemented in marketing research, are conceived of by introducing / manipulating in a first stage a specific emotion, then by presenting target stimuli (stage 2) and finally by measuring the memorization of these stimuli (stage 3). However, this kind of studies, no matter how indicative of interesting paths they can be, are not sufficient to predict what the influence of a program on embedded ads will be, the latter having a specific status, likely to get—for instance—a very different attention according to individuals' knowledge and expectancies.

Effects of program-induced emotion on ad recall and recognition

The influence of a program's emotional tone on advertising effectiveness must be distinguished from another theme, not addressed here, i.e. the recourse and effectiveness of affect-laden commercials for brand persuasion, which has been largely scrutinized in marketing research (for a review, see Weinberger and Gulas, 1992). However, some authors have tied these two research domains, by studying the effects of emotional congruity between context and advertising, on ad memorization (Horn and McEwen, 1977; Perry *et al.*, 1997).

To address the subject of a program's emotional tone on advertising effectiveness, several approaches were chosen: (a) some researchers used TV programs containing specific emotional tonality: thriller or sit com (Kennedy 1971), sit com, documentary or action / adventure (Murphy Cunningham and Wilcox 1979), (b) other investigators varied the general emotional tone of the program: sad vs. happy shows (Golberg and Gorn 1987), humorous programs (Perry *et al.*, 1997), violent vs. neutral broadcasts (Bushman and Bonacci, 2002), (c) while others finally managed to manipulate the viewer's involvement level in function of:

- *program type*: high involving program vs. low involving program (Soldow et Principe 1981), or involving and non-involving programs (Norris and Colman, 1993)
- *advertising break location*: low vs. high elaboration locations (Lord and Burnkrant, 1988)
- *level of intrusiveness*: intrusive vs. non intrusive breaks (Tavassoli, Schultz and Fitzsimons, 1995)
- *program specificity*: involvement or not toward soccer games (Pham, 1992), or toward Super Bowl game (Pavelchak, Antil and Munch, 1988).

Dependant variables mainly observed in studies, may include memory scores in terms of free / cued recall or recognition (Kennedy, 1971; Soldow and Principe, 1981; Goldberg and Gorn 1987; Lord and Burnkrant, 1988; Pavelchak, Antil and Munch, 1988; Norris and Colman, 1992; Pham, 1992; Tavassoli, Shultz and Fitzsimons, 1995), attitude toward advertising (Kennedy, 1971; Soldow and Principe, 1981; Goldberg and Gorn, 1987; Tavassoli, Shultz and Fitzsimons, 1995), attitude toward the brand (Kennedy, 1971; Norris and Colman, 1992) or purchase intentions (Kennedy, 1971; Soldow and Principe, 1981; Goldberg and Gorn, 1987).

If one focuses on memory score, usual instrument for measuring ad effectiveness, results often differ for various independent variables. For some researchers, an increase in arousal entails a better ad effectiveness (Singh and Churchill, 1987). Others, conversely, record opposite results: for Pavelchak, Antil and Munch (1988), "*day-after recall is better when arousal is low*"; Lord and Burnkrant (1988) indicate a better memorization when commer-

cial are inserted in a program setting characterized by low levels of elaboration, while Pham (1992) shows that "*high arousal entails lower recognition scores*". Others, finally, underscore the absence of arousal level effect on ad memory scores (Mattes and Cantor, 1982). As far as involvement is concerned, while Krugman (1983) writes: "*involvement with advertising tends to be consistent with interest in the editorial environment*", Norris and Coleman (1993) note that the more subjects are involved, the less they remember commercials. Meanwhile, Tavassoli, Shultz and Fitzsimons (1995) announce a more complex relationship: "*memory scores are better under moderate as compared to low and high levels of program involvement*", as well as Pham (1992), who declares that "*effect of felt involvement on the recognition is curvilinear*". One of the main reasons which is given to explain these disparities is the fact that "*in many experiments, no attempt has been made to control for prior exposure to the advertising materials*" (Norris and Coleman, 1993). Notice that this control is sometimes undertaken but seems insufficient. Indeed, when a subject is simply requested to say if he already saw a commercial (yes or no), the "yes" answer does not give any indication on the number of ad exposures prior to the experiment. But this point is particularly important insofar as memory scores are concerned and collected.

Advertisers' main focus on the optimization of budgets, the discrepancies in results between various studies and the heavy presence of violence on television (Bushman and Bonacci, 2002; p 558), all these reasons argue for a thorough study of the influence of violent programs on advertising effectiveness.

It is legitimate to presume that exposure to a violent program entails an increase in arousal, both on physiological and affective sides. This statement will be evaluated here by comparing the subject's mood before and after exposure to the program with Mehrabian and Russell's PAD scale (1977). Henceforth, if one agrees with the statement that there is a positive relationship between an arousal level increase and memory—i.e. a high activation enhances or facilitates memorization process—then the following hypothesis may be set forth:

H1: Ads embedded in a violent program will be better recalled than ads in a neutral, low-involving program.

Should one agree with the belief that there is a negative relationship between an arousal level increase and memory—a strong activation is detrimental to memory consolidation (e.g. Pavelchak, Antil and Munch, 1988)—then the alternative hypothesis should be proposed:

H2: Ads inserted in a neutral, low-involving program are likely to be better recalled than those inserted in a violent or arousing context.

METHOD

The experiment consisted in exposing subjects to commercials embedded in neutral or violent programs, edited on video cassettes, and in asking them after the exposure to carry out tasks of explicit memorization (recall and recognition).

Stimuli selection

In this experiment, two types of stimuli have been elaborated and tested. The first type regards TV program contexts, for which we pre-selected movie or documentary clips to subsequently mimic television programs. The second type of stimuli pertains to advertising material, i.e. commercials designed to be embedded together in the program as a commercial break.

Selection of programs: Before the experiment, a questionnaire was submitted to a jury of about 50 students, requesting them to remember and write down the name of movies they saw, containing violent scenes. Based on these statements, a pre-edited video was made, i.e. a cassette containing 12 clips of movies previously judged as “very violent”. Then another group of 47 students was asked to give an evaluation mark for each sequence, ranging from 1 (“really not violent at all”) to 10 (“really very violent”), so as to get an average mark for each violent clip or sequence. The first 8 sequences, having obtained the highest marks (“Saving private Ryan”, “Another day in paradise”, “Taxi driver”, “Apocalypse now”, “Lethal weapon 4”, “Blade runner” and “The devil’s advocate”), were selected for final editing. The “neutral” program, not jury-evaluated, was composed of 2 sequences extracted from 2 documentaries: one on the ancient tribes of Easter Island, the other on the future NASA Mars Explorer mission. Both sequences were devoid of violence. All selected sequences were digitally edited then copied on video VHS tapes. The two resulting programs on video cassettes both had a total duration of 31 minutes.

Selection of commercials: The selection of commercials responded to several criteria: (a) the tested subjects being students, advertised products had to be possibly consumed by this target, (b) they were to be pertinent for both men and women, and (c) in order to minimize as much as possible the effects of previous exposures to brands or advertisements, commercials aired in 1996 were chosen. Four brands and products portrayed in these commercials have since disappeared from the market: Mukti cereal bar, Aquavital shampoo, Vie Active deodorant and Le Roule cheese. The remaining four commercials were either (1) presumably unknown by students, due to marginal market shares, or (2) absent from main distributing networks, or (3) absent from mass media communication since 1996. These latter brands are: Metaspirine aspirin tablets, ADO house curtains, Quinotone tonic and Dr Scholl’s foot products. This methodological choice was voluntary made to get as close as possible to optimal experimental conditions, where subjects are exposed for the first time to professionally-shot commercials, promoting products of “a new brand”, so as to get both acceptable internal validity and external validity.

Main experiment

Subjects: Groups of subjects (N=357; mean age 19.6 years; 64.7% were female) were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions—neutral (N) or violent (V)—totaling 151 and 206 subjects, respectively. Disparity of groups (15 to 45 students) explains the discrepancy in sample size. All subjects were regularly-registered college students (mostly freshmen and sophomores) following courses in marketing or management. They voluntarily participated in the experiment, after having been plainly informed of the programs’ emotional tones, especially that of the “violence” (V) experimental condition.

Design of experiment: The type of program, neutral or violent, was manipulated in the experiment (between-subject factor). The subjects’ optimal stimulation level (OSL) and moods (pre- and post-exposure) represented the moderating variables. Right after the projection, subjects were asked to assess the program’s violence intensity and to remember the name of the advertised brands.

Procedure: The experiment was presented as part of a University research program on the evaluation of cable TV programs, regarding variety and tonality. Subjects in each group were informed that program duration was about 30 minutes; they were asked to stay relaxed, to watch the program as if at home, and to refrain nevertheless from talking with their neighbors. No mention was made of the advertisements. Before effective video projection,

participants were requested to fill in both the *Change Seeker Index* (CSI) scale from Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1995), consisting in seven 5-point items measuring the subject’s optimal stimulation level and the iconic *Self-Assessment Manikin* (SAM) scale (Bradley and Lang, 1994), comprising here two 9-point scales for tested mood dimensions (i.e. pleasure and arousal). This latter scale has the advantage to be quick to submit and non-verbal (Morris and McMullen, 1994; Morris *et al.*, 2002).

Groups of subjects (between 15 and 45), randomly assigned either to condition V or N, were invited to watch a 31-minute program. In both edited videos, the same advertisements were embedded in the middle of the program (13th minute) to form a single commercial break, totaling 2’43”. Considering that CRT monitors would not be efficient enough for the simultaneous testing of many subjects under satisfactory conditions of exposure, programs were projected using a “Barco” video projector on a wide screen, equipped with stereo loudspeakers. Immediately afterward viewing, subjects were asked to: (1) to fill in the SAM scale, to express their post-exposure mood, (2) to indicate on a 10-point scale if the program shown was: “not boring at all—extremely boring” and “not violent at all—extremely violent”, (3) to write down as much as possible the brand names promoted in the commercials (immediate free recall task), during a maximum allotted time of 1’15”, (4) to indicate if they had previously seen one or more of the projected commercials, and to specify which ones, (5) to say on average, how many hours spent daily in front of the television set, (6) to estimate approximately the share of violent programs watched, (7) to recognize the 8 promoted brands within a list of 40 brands (immediate recognition task; maximum time: 1’15”). The 40 listed brands were presented in two different orders for each half of each sample.

RESULTS

Violence ratings: The evaluations of tested subjects are coherent with those obtained at the time of the pretest sessions and thus substantiate the previous choices of sequences, since the subjects exposed to the “V” condition evaluated the program as being significantly more violent than the other subjects from the “N” condition ($p < .0001$) (see Table 1).

Mood ratings: Mood self-evaluations of subjects, who were assigned either to V or N conditions, reveal that before presentation of stimulus, respective levels of pleasure (hedonic valence) or arousal (activation) did not significantly differ (respectively $p > .1$ and $p > .5$). Whereas after exposure, mood measures show a significant variation of subjects’ mood on both controlled dimensions (see Table 2), at the $p < .0001$ level.

Also, in each condition group, within-subject comparisons of dimension mean scores, before and after exposure to video stimulus, indicate that the nature of this exposure did entail a change in subjects’ mood (significant at the $p < .0001$ level). Subjects in neutral condition had both their pleasure and arousal levels decreased (they got bored), whereas subjects exposed to a violence-laden program saw their pleasure level plummet while their arousal level soared (they got mildly shocked).

Memory ratings: Results indicate that memory scores, both for immediate free recall and recognition, are significantly different between the two program conditions (see Table 3). As for the free (i.e. unaided) recall test, subjects who were exposed to a violent TV program remembered more advertised brands than those exposed to a neutral program ($p < .0001$). Again, regarding the recognition test, subjects exposed to the violent condition displayed a better recognition memory than the other group ($p < .05$): about 5.4 brands were recognized against 5.0, respectively.

TABLE 1
Experimental conditions evaluation scores

Scores	TV program type (experimental condition)	
	Violence	Neutral
Violent	8.41*	1.51
Boring	4.81 ^{ns}	4.73

*Significant at the .0001 level. Scores scaled from 1 (not at all) to 10 (extremely).

TABLE 2
Subjects' emotional states before and after stimulus presentation

Condition	Pleasure before	Arousal before	Pleasure after	Arousal after
Neutral	6.21	3.85	5.48	3.10
Violent	6.47	3.97	4.33	4.55
<i>F</i> -test (1, 357)	2.57	.39	45.49	59.04
<i>probability</i>	>.1	>.5	<.0001	<.0001

Scores scaled from 1 to 9 for both mood dimensions.

TABLE 3
Recall and recognition of brands by condition

Condition	Immediate free recall	Immediate recognition
Neutral	0.974	5.020
Violent	1.927	5.398
<i>F</i> -test (1, 357)	37.74	3.97
<i>Probability</i>	<.0001	<.05

Scores are average number of remembered brands (from 1 to 8) for both memory measures.

Consequently, H1 is validated and H2 is rejected. Besides, no significant difference was found for other antecedent or moderating variables, such as gender and optimal stimulation level. Other computations such as structural equation modeling will shortly be undertaken to determine the existence of any explanatory personal factors.

DISCUSSION

Results obtained in the present experiment—ad memory is enhanced in a context of violent vs. neutral programming—do not replicate Bushman and Bonacci's (2002), as for the "Violence" and "Neutral" conditions, since no "Sex" condition had been tested by the present authors. These results are nevertheless consistent with prevailing views of neuropsychology, who consider that emotional arousal, more than valence of the stimulus, is a key factor of memory enhancement at encoding or retrieval (Hamann *et al.*, 1999). This discrepancy may be explained by some differences in experimental procedures. *Firstly*, Bushman and Bonacci (2002) exposed their subjects to *one* continuous clip of a violent movie (for instance "La Femme Nikita" or "Millenium"), while we purposely

exposed our subjects to an editing composed of several successive violent movie clips, less regularly aired on TV. As a matter of fact, Bushman and Bonacci's (2002) violence score in V condition reaches 6.34 (from 1 "not violent at all" to 10 "extremely violent"), which may be considered as a moderate level. Using the same violence scale, our editing in V condition attains a score of 8.41. Therefore, this would mean that a mildly violent program would impair memory of embedded commercials, while a very violent program would enhance recall and recognition of inserted ads. This point has to be carefully and thoroughly addressed, to the extent that it would mean a curvilinear, "U"-shaped (and not inverted) relationship between arousal levels and strength of memory retention. *Secondly*, Bushman and Bonacci (2002) carried out memory strength evaluations (recall and recognition) right after exposure to stimulus but also a week after (Day 7). We had opted in a first stage for the same methodology but it soon appeared that the measurement of immediate recognition memory could inherently bias subsequent delayed recall and recognition memories (Haist, Shimamura and Squire 1992). To verify this point we compared, in an initial procedure, two 30-individual groups. Results unmistakably indi-

cate that delayed recall and recognition scores significantly differ according as these measures are preceded or not by an immediate recognition memory test. If a delayed measurement is needed, the adequate sequence should be: immediate recall, delayed recall and delayed recognition. Therefore, some memory results might be biased.

Besides, it is surprising that these authors did not detect any interaction between the mnemonic performance scores and the age of the subjects: “*there were no main effects or interactions for any of the demographic variables (i.e. sex, age, race) on any of the memory measures (p > .05)*” (Bushman and Bonacci, 2002; p 560). According to these authors, the older subjects, aged 50 to 54, show performances identical to those of the 18-24 year-olds, which is certainly soothing but little in agreement with present research on cognitive aging (Reuter-Lorenz, 2002; Daselaar *et al.*, 2003). Indeed, if it seems demonstrated that implicit memory effects resist fairly well to the effects of aging, it is conversely well established in psychology (Parkin and Streete, 1988) as well as in marketing (Hawkins and Yoon, 1998) that performances obtained during explicit memory tasks—such as free recall and recognition which are manipulated here by the two authors -, requiring voluntary and conscious retrieval of specific episodes, decline with age. Moreover, the quantity of to-be-remembered items (9 commercials in three separate breaks) leaves out any possible non-significant performance differences because of a too easy task for all subjects.

Finally, it appears precarious to use recent or current advertising material, as did Bushman and Bonacci (2002) even if, as a control check, they asked the subjects to say after exposure, if they had already seen before, one or more of these commercials (yes / no). The manipulation check appears weak since the “yes” answer does not indeed give any indication on the number of ad exposures preceding the experiment; some subjects will have been exposed one or twice, while others will have maybe dozens of time. It is also important that the consumer’s familiarity and loyalty with the advertised (current) brands be controlled. No question relates to the use, by the subjects, of the advertised brands. Beside any problem of commercial exposure evoked *supra*, it is obvious that the mere regular use of a brand will have a significant impact on its further memorization and accessibility (Kent and Allen, 1994).

LIMITATIONS

In this study, we show that embedding of commercials in a violent television program facilitates ad memory. This results were obtained with 18- to 25-year-olds, generally considered as large consumers and fans of violent programs or movies. The choice of this population segment seems substantiated or justified but it now appears necessary to attempt a replication of this study with other categories of age. Besides, as other researchers previously suggested (Horn and McEwen 1977; Blaney 1986), it would be useful to investigate the subject of emotional tone congruence between the television program and the embedded commercial: does a humorous commercial inserted in a violent program, for instance, yield a lower effectiveness than in a humorous program ?

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Beyond current marketing research agendas, violence is a societal issue of our times. Bushman previously stated that violence-laden programming on television was detrimental to an effective ad memorization: “*if the television program bleeds, memory for the advertisement recedes*” (Bushman and Philips, 2001). Our results are opposite: violence on television does not impair memorization in any way, but on the contrary, does enhance ad memory, via reinforced encoding and retention. In an unfortu-

nate sense, crime or violence does pay in the realm of television advertising. Two final comments emerge from this statement of divergence. Firstly, as previously underscored by increasing numbers of researchers, marketing particularly needs replication works (Hunter, 2001). The present study enters this category. Secondly, should violence in television programs entail—as we think—a better memorization of inserted commercials, through a heightened level of arousal and vigilance in the individual, we should then not expect in the near future any call for reduction or curtailment from national brands and media networks.

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Using Market-Specific Symbols in Advertising to Attract Gays and Lesbians Without Alienating the Mainstream

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Why should marketers risk alienating heterosexual consumers by placing ads with gay content in mainstream media? First, an enormous proportion of gays and lesbians cannot be reached through gay media. While the number of advertisers who target the "Dream Market" in gay media continues to grow (Wall Street Journal 1999), a placement of an ad in *OUT* and *The Advocate*, the two most widely circulated gay magazines, will reach only 3% of the gay and lesbian population, at most (Poux 1998). Conversely, more than 90% of gay men and 82% of lesbians reportedly read mainstream magazines. Second, by bringing gay issues into the mainstream, marketers may stand to gain from the goodwill of gay and lesbian consumers who strive for the acceptance of gays and lesbians into mainstream society. Peñaloza (1996) contends that many gay and lesbian consumers consider their inclusion in marketplace activities as recognition of the progress of the gay social movement.

Thus, to provide advertisers with a better understanding of how to effectively cross-over into mainstream media with gay- and lesbian-targeted advertisements without alienating larger mainstream audiences, this study examines the responses of both heterosexual and homosexual consumers to advertising content that includes mainstream imagery, implicit gay and lesbian imagery, and explicit gay or lesbian imagery.

To date, firms that have used gay imagery in mainstream media have predominantly used depictions of gay males in their advertising, mirroring the enormous bias toward male-oriented advertising in gay and lesbian media (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2000). While the use of gay male imagery may represent effective targeting in gay and lesbian media with a predominantly male readership, it may result in the highest risk of backlash from heterosexual audiences in mainstream media. Bhat, Leigh, and Wardlow (1999) found that mainstream consumers reacted less favorably to advertising depicting gay male imagery than advertising depicting heterosexual imagery. Drawing on research from the social sciences that suggests that heterosexuals have more positive attitudes toward lesbians than gay males, Oakenfull and Greenlee (Forthcoming) showed that these attitudes tend to be transferred to responses to gay and lesbian imagery in advertising. Hence, advertisers may reduce the potential for negative backlash from mainstream audiences by including depictions of lesbians rather than gay males in their advertising in mainstream media (Oakenfull and Greenlee (Forthcoming)).

However, while mainstream consumers may prefer lesbian imagery to gay imagery in advertising, marketers must consider whether the use of any type of explicit same-sex imagery would be received more negatively than a mainstream advertisement by mainstream consumers, thus alienating the majority for the sake of targeting the few. Despite the fact that heterosexual consumers may be more favorably disposed to advertising depicting lesbians than those with gay males (Oakenfull and Greenlee (Forthcoming)), drawing from Identity theory, we know that consumers respond less favorably to advertisements that do not reflect their self-identity (Jaffe 1991). Thus, we can expect mainstream consumers to fail to identify with advertising that contains explicitly gay or lesbian imagery, which will result in a relatively less favorable attitude toward the advertisement.

H1: Heterosexual consumers will have a more positive attitude toward advertisements with mainstream imagery than those with explicit gay male or explicit lesbian imagery.

The key to advertising to gays and lesbians within mainstream media without alienating heterosexual consumers may lie in the tenet that "gayness is in the eye of the beholder." As with many subcultures (Hebdige 1979), the gay subculture has developed "markers of gay identity" (Tharp 2001) such as clothes, symbols, language and appearance (Altman 1987, Kates 1998, Meyer 1994) that hold meaning to members of the subculture, while creating no meaning to those who have no knowledge of the subculture. Hence, advertisers may effectively reach both gays and lesbians in mainstream media with minimal risk of alienating heterosexuals by "implicit" gay and lesbian imagery such as gay iconography or symbolism (Peñaloza 1996, Grier and Brumbaugh 1999). One may also assume that those heterosexual consumers with a negative attitude toward homosexuality, and thus most likely to be offended by gay and lesbian content in advertising (Bhat, Leigh, and Wardlow 1999), would be least likely to identify or understand gay iconography. Additionally, given the exclusive nature of the message, the use of implicit gay and lesbian imagery in mainstream media has the characteristics of an "inside joke," allowing gay and lesbian consumers to feel bonded with the advertiser against less-informed mainstream adversaries (Peñaloza 1996). Thus, such a strategy would allow gay and lesbian consumers to identify with the advertising and will be received equally as well as advertising with explicit depictions of gay male or lesbian imagery.

Therefore, we can hypothesize the following:

H2: Heterosexual consumers will have a more positive attitude toward advertisements with implicit gay and lesbian imagery than those with explicit gay or lesbian imagery.

H3: Gay and Lesbian consumers will have a more positive attitude toward advertisements with implicit gay and lesbian imagery than those with mainstream imagery.

Method

Participants in the study included 118 self-identified homosexual adults, including 46 females and 68 males, and 134 heterosexual adults, 74 females and 60 males from five geographic regions of the United States. Participants were presented with the four advertisements—1) a mainstream advertisement, 2) an advertisement with implicit gay and lesbian imagery, 3) an advertisement with explicit gay male imagery, and 4) an advertisement with explicit lesbian imagery, and instructed to answer a three-item attitude toward the advertisement measure accompanying each advertisement.

Findings

This study shows that, while depictions of gay males and lesbians in advertising will effectively target gay and lesbian consumers, they will also result in an unfavorable response from mainstream consumers. The results of this study indicate that heterosexual consumers are more averse to advertisements depicting

gay males and lesbians than mainstream advertising content. However, while heterosexual consumers preferred advertisements with mainstream imagery to those with explicit gay or explicit lesbian imagery, advertisements containing implicit gay and lesbian imagery were received as well as those with mainstream imagery. Thus, it can be assumed that mainstream audiences were either unaware that the advertisement contained gay and lesbian imagery or responded more favorably to the more subtle content.

Gay and lesbian consumers have an equally favorable response to all types of gay- and lesbian-targeted advertising including those with implicit gay and lesbian imagery. Thus, by using implicit gay and lesbian imagery in advertising placed in mainstream media, marketers can appeal to gay and lesbian consumers in mainstream media with little risk of creating negative sentiments among heterosexual consumers.

If We Know the Difference What's the Harm? The Effects of Brand Equity Misappropriation and Dilution

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Recently, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of a small store against a world-famous lingerie manufacturer and retailer. The owners of the little shop, which sells lingerie and other "adult novelty" items, named their store "Victor's Secret." Shortly after opening, they were sued by Victoria's Secret, claiming protection of its brand name under the Federal Trademark Dilution Act of 1995. Trademark dilution refers to a decrease in brand equity (in the *senior brand*) that is created by the unauthorized use of the brand by a third party (the *junior brand*). Trademark dilution differs from the more familiar concept of trademark infringement in that it occurs in the absence of consumer confusion about the relationship between the senior and junior brands.

A key issue before the Court was the legal standard for proof in trademark dilution cases. The Court provided only broad boundaries within which the acceptable level of proof of dilution will ultimately be defined, ruling that evidence of mere association between the brands is insufficient, while evidence of lost sales or profits is not required.

In three experiments, we examine the use of brand knowledge accessibility measures and brand choice probabilities to demonstrate dilution and to examine moderators of its effects (cf. Morrin and Jacoby 2000). Dilution occurs when a senior brand name or its distinctive associations become less accessible in memory. These are changes in brand knowledge accessibility; specifically, reductions in *brand name accessibility* or *aspect accessibility*. In practical terms, consumers are then less likely to consider the brand (because the brand name is less likely to come to mind or to be quickly recognized on the shelf) and less likely to choose the brand (because it is less likely to be seen as possessing its distinctive aspects). Hence, changes in brand knowledge accessibility are followed by changes in brand choice probabilities.

We also use brand knowledge accessibility measures to examine reinforcement effects than can accrue to the senior brand and "leveraging" and "backfire" effects that can accrue to the junior brand. Reinforcement occurs when consumers' knowledge of the senior brand is reinforced rather than diluted by the presence of a junior brand. Leveraging occurs when the junior brand benefits by gaining some of the senior brand's associations (Swann and Davis 1994), while backfiring occurs when the junior brand is hindered in its attempt to create unique associations. Reinforcement effects are of special importance because they signal that the senior brand has become implicitly associated in consumers' minds with the junior brand. Even though reinforcement does not itself constitute dilution, it is a signal that the junior brand has gained the power to dilute the senior brand via any undesirable future actions (Swann and Davis 1994).

Following the pioneering efforts of Peterson, Smith, and Zerrillo (1999) and Morrin and Jacoby (2000), we derive our predictions from associative network theory (Anderson 1983). Dilution occurs when a junior brand and its associations compete with existing associations in the senior brand network and thereby reduce the accessibility of the senior brand name and its distinctive aspects. Therefore, we expect that dilution is most likely when the junior brand belongs to a dissimilar product category or has dissimi-

lar attribute associations. On the other hand, we expect that senior brand name accessibility and aspect accessibility increase when the junior brand belongs to a similar product category or has similar attribute associations, thereby reinforcing the senior brand's associations rather than diluting them.

Following the same logic, we expect that leveraging of a senior brand's equity by a junior brand (i.e., enhanced brand name and aspect accessibility) is likely when the junior brand's distinctive associations are similar to those of the senior brand, and that backfire effects (i.e., reduced brand name accessibility and aspect accessibility for the junior brand) is likely when the junior brand's distinctive associations are dissimilar to those of the senior brand.

Results of our three computer-administrated experiments generally support our conceptualization. In Experiment 1, we examine the effects of category similarity. The senior and junior brands are moderately similar in terms of attributes (one similar and one dissimilar attribute), but vary in terms of category similarity. As expected, senior brand associations are reinforced when category similarity is high; that is, brand name accessibility and attribute accessibility both increase. Also as expected, some senior brand associations are diluted when category similarity is low. Specifically, brand name accessibility decreases, although aspect accessibility is unaffected. Leveraging and backfire effects are also consistent with expectation. Specifically, junior brand name accessibility and aspect accessibility (for aspects that are similar to the senior brand) are increased with high category similarity and reduced with low category similarity.

In Experiment 2, we examine the moderating effects of attribute similarity, and find that junior brands with attributes that are dissimilar to those of the senior brand (i.e., two dissimilar attributes rather than one similar attribute and one dissimilar attribute as in Experiment 1) dilute the senior brand regardless of category similarity. Further, both brand name accessibility and aspect accessibility are affected. Hence, the extent of dilution effects depends upon the degree and type of dissimilarity between the junior and senior brands. The relative importance of category vs. attribute similarity deserves further systematic investigation.

Finally, in Experiment 3, we examine whether the dilution of brand knowledge observed in Experiments 1 and 2 is strong enough to carry over to choice. We examine how three highly familiar senior brands are affected by highly dissimilar (i.e., dissimilar category and attributes) junior brands. For example, we examine dilution effects for Big Red chewing gum (which is cinnamon flavored) when subjects are exposed to the junior brand Big Red snack bars with strawberry flavor. As expected, exposure to the junior brand significantly decreases choice of the senior brand.

Our work demonstrates measures of dilution that go beyond mere association between the junior and senior brands, which the Supreme Court has ruled as inadequate evidence of dilution. Instead, we show that the senior brand is less likely to be recalled or quickly recognized and that it is also less likely to be chosen. How might one use these measures in the marketplace? Dilution is demonstrated by showing weakened brand name and aspect accessibility (or their close correlates) or decreased choice that is attributable to the emergence of the junior brand. While we must rely on

correlational evidence, some patterns are strongly suggestive of dilution. For example, the relevant accessibilities and choice probabilities may be depressed only in geographical areas in which the junior brand has a presence. As another example, accessibilities and choice probabilities may be lowest among those who *subsequently* report awareness of the junior brand (to avoid the possibility of self-generated validity) (Feldman and Lynch 1988).

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Strategic Brand Concept and Brand Architecture Strategy—A Proposed Model

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ABSTRACT

Some of the most pressing brand-related problems concern the management of a system of several brands, i.e. brand architecture, rather than one individual brand. By integrating three fields of theory, (a) the theory of strategic brand concepts, (b) the theory of information processing, and (c) a typology of brand architecture strategies, this paper proposes an explorative instrument, BASE, from which to derive an appropriate brand architecture strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Some of the most pressing brand-related problems concern the management of a system of several brands rather than one individual brand, be it a portfolio of several brands in isolation (“House of Brands”, see Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000) or a complex brand architecture of several connected subbrands or endorsed brands. There are a number of reasons why the brand architectures of many companies are becoming increasingly complex. Many product categories are in the maturity stage and consumer preferences are becoming increasingly heterogeneous, forcing companies towards a higher degree of product differentiation. Furthermore, mergers and acquisitions heighten the need to merge not only different corporate cultures, but also different brand portfolios in a way that makes good business sense. The Internet provides an opportunity to develop existing brands into e-enabled offline brands or to build pure e-brands. And finally, the increasing demands of shareholders have also heightened pressure to improve the efficiency of marketing, not least with a view to creating a cost-effective brand structure. Thus, many brand manufacturers are currently streamlining their brand portfolio.

Building on an analysis of existing literature, this article contributes to the theory of brand architecture management by combining three fields of theory, (a) the theory of strategic brand concepts (Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis 1986), (b) the theory of information processing, in particular dual-process models (e.g. Chaiken, Wood, and Eagly 1996; Epstein 1983; Petty and Cacioppo 1986), and (c) a typology of brand architecture strategies.

BRAND ARCHITECTURE STRATEGY

Brand-architecture strategy pertains to the “organizing structure of the brand portfolio” (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000, p. 134) and defines the number and roles of brand names that a company uses for its range of products and the target groups or target markets it serves (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000; Kapferer 1999; Keller 1998; Laforet and Saunders 1999). As for the number of brands, brand-architecture strategy ranges from a single brand for all products and target groups of a company to a strategy in which every single product carries its own brand name. Starting from a hypothetical matrix of four products and/or service categories (P_1 to P_4) and four target groups or markets in which the company operates (T_1 to T_4), there are five brand architecture strategies representing ideal types from which to select (see figure 1). A *corporate brand strategy* (subsequently abbreviated to “C-branding”) adopts a uniform brand for all product categories and target groups. In a *product brand strategy* (“P-branding”), each product category of the company has its own brand name which yields four different brand names. These P-brands have no recognizable connection for the customer. However, one and the same brand name is used for all target groups within the product category. A P-branding strategy can be based on a fine distinction between

product categories, resulting in product brands in the narrower sense, or to a more general classification of product categories (“line” or “range brands”, e.g. Kapferer 1999, p. 188). In a *target group brand strategy* (“T-branding”), the company targets each of its four target groups with a separate brand name, which stands for a number of products. With a *product and target-group-specific brand strategy* (“PT-branding”) each field in the matrix is given its own brand name which results in 16 different brands. And finally, in a *brand family strategy* (“F-branding”), hierarchically ranked brand names have a common endorser, together with a certain number of endorsed brands or subbrands with their own personality. These brand families can also include more than two hierarchical levels and differ from the C-branding strategy in that the subbrands are not merely given purely generic product descriptions, but have registered brand names, which are generally promoted individually. These subbrands can be P-brands, T-brands or PT-brands.

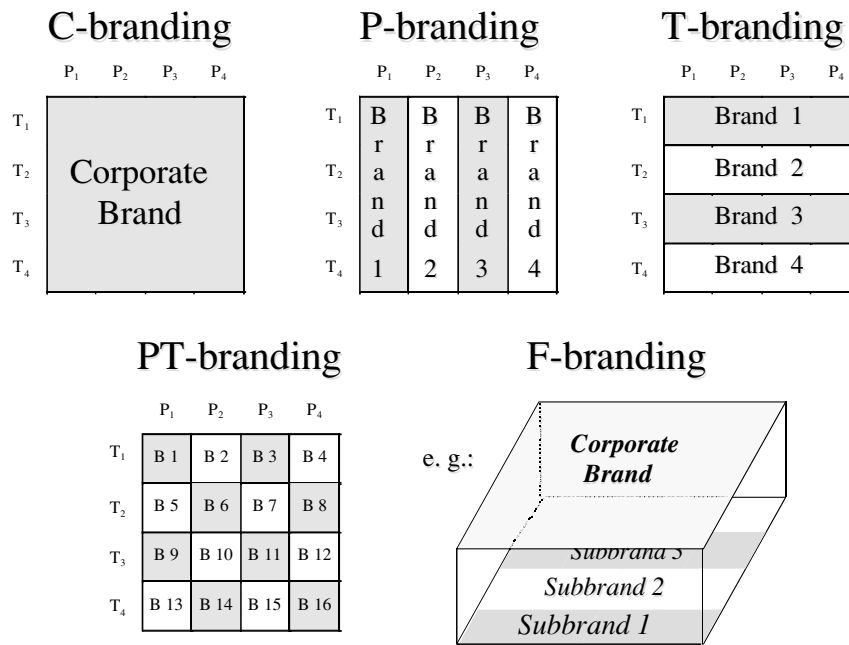
One of the core conclusions drawn from research to date is that brand architectures with a large number of brands such as P-branding, T-branding or—in extreme cases—PT-branding require compelling reasons (e.g., Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000, p. 123; Kapferer 1999, p. 209), as more closely integrated brand architectures with fewer brands such as C-branding or F-branding generally offer a higher degree of efficiency and effectiveness (e.g., Esch 2003; Erdem and Sun 2002; Morrin 1999; Sander 1994; Smith and Park 1992; Swaminathan, Fox, and Reddy 2001). Based on the empirical findings of research on brand extension, the theory of strategic brand concepts (Park et al. 1986), and the theory of information processing, particularly dual-process models (e.g. Chaiken et al. 1996; Epstein 1983; Petty and Cacioppo 1986), this paper proposes a new model called BASE (“Brand-Architecture Strategy Explorer”), from which to derive an appropriate brand architecture strategy.

STRATEGIC BRAND CONCEPTS AND INFORMATION PROCESSING

As research on brand extensions illustrates, success not only depends on the perceived quality of the parent brand (e.g. Aaker and Keller 1990; Bottomley and Holden 2001), but also on the similarity of products (e.g. Sattler et al. 2002; Smith and Park 1992; Swaminathan et al. 2001; Taylor and Bearden 2002) and the transferability of abstract image components of the parent brand to the new product (e.g. Aaker and Keller 1990; Bottomley and Holden 2001; Bridges 1992; Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; Mayerhofer 1995; Park, Milberg, and Lawson 1991; Schweiger and Mazanec 1981). In fact, a good match between the strategic brand concept and the new product seems to contribute significantly to the success of a brand extension (Keller 1998, p. 510; Park et al. 1991). Park, Jaworski and MacInnis (1986) distinguish three strategic brand concepts—“functional”, “experiential” and “symbolic brands”, to which a fourth concept has been added here, “relational brands” (see figure 2). With a reasonable degree of plausibility, these four strategic brand concepts can be classified according to the motives and benefits as well as the predominant styles of thinking displayed by customers in their buying decisions.

Functional brand concepts promise a higher product benefit, for example, through technical superiority, higher durability, reliability or simply good value for money (e.g. Wal-Mart, see field 1 in Figure 1). As this brand concept focuses on the use of central

FIGURE 1
Brand architecture strategies



arguments (e. g. product attributes), it should be utilized by companies with leading brands especially in cases where the customer’s involvement and product knowledge suffice to enable such arguments to be processed. This style of thinking is described in the literature as “central” (e.g., Petty and Cacioppo 1986), “systematic” (e. g., Chaiken et al. 1996) or “rational” (Epstein 1983), and can be “integrative” as far as the adopted brand architecture is concerned in two respects: On the one hand, this style of thinking tends to delineate very accurately and focuses on logical connections (Epstein et al. 1992, p. 329). In cases where a brand encompasses a broad product range, for example, this prevents an excessive degree of psychological overlap between one product and another, evoking unsuitable or undesired associations. On the other hand, a wide product range encompassed by one brand, together with the fact that the brand is purchased by many consumers, are arguments in favor of brand quality and brand reliability for functionally-oriented customers (e.g., Aaker and Maheswaran 1997; Dacin and Smith 1994; DelVecchio 2000; Hellofs and Jacobson 1998; Kirmani and Rao 2000; Rao, Qu, and Ruekert 1999; Wernerfelt 1988).

Experiential brand concepts (field 3) emphasize the sensual experience of the product by building up associations with the five senses—taste, smell, hearing, sight, and touch. This includes the crispiness of potato chips as well as the freshness of toothpaste or the feel of clothes on the skin. Products are often designed to appeal to more than one of the senses. Such is the case with detergent, whose powerful cleaning properties are portrayed synesthetically through smell, color and viscosity. Experiential brand concepts aim to evoke hedonism and pleasure through a sensual product experience and are most closely comparable to the processing style termed “experiential” by Epstein (1983). In many cases, the sensual product experience is based on a largely preconscious processing which works without, or in addition to, rational processing (e.g. Epstein et al. 1992, p. 329). It is assumed that this style of thinking works

“separatively” as far as brand architecture is concerned: As a consequence of its holistic nature experiential processing tends to overgeneralize and adopts a simple covariance learning which cannot recognize logical barriers between products (cf. Adaval 2001; Lewicki, Hill, and Czyzewska 1994). A food brand, which the customer has frequently experienced in the form of savory products, will have difficulties launching sweet products under the same brand name (Strebinger et al. 2003). In addition, the consumer does not appear to be interested in “compromise products” when it comes to sensual pleasure, but in unique, clear experiences. This desire is expressed in a higher degree of variety seeking among experiential products (Inman 2001).

Symbolic brand concepts (field 2) enable the buyer to express personality, values and status and help to improve self-esteem and social self-presentation (e.g. prestige). This goal is typically linked to biased processing, creating a highly advantageous self-image or high degree of prestige—often in contrast to the facts and feedback of the social environment (e.g., Aaker 1999; Chaiken et al. 1996). This biased information processing can be both a systematic process as well as a heuristic one (Chen, Shechter, and Chaiken 1996). Considering the impact on brand architecture strategy, there are two arguments in favor of a separative effect of symbolic brand concepts: First and foremost, most consumers—at least in the western world—want to differentiate their own personality from that of others (Markus and Kitayama 1991; Markus, Kitayama, and Heiman 1996). Second, biased information processing is always a highly fragile game, which only works as long as the cue used manipulatively (e.g. a prestige brand) is absolutely clear and unmistakable. A brand personality that does not unequivocally stand for certain values or user imagery will lose its symbolic value.

Relational brand concepts try to evoke an emotional attachment to the brand and to impart a sense of familiarity with the brand. Quite often, relational brand concepts (field 4) are based on a

FIGURE 2
Strategic brand concepts, consumer benefits and processing style

3	Experiential	9	Relational	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumer benefit: pleasure • prevailing processing style: experiential processing • effect on brand architecture: separative (product categories) 		exper. & relatl.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumer benefit: sympathy, attachment, & trust • prevailing processing style: peripheral processing • effect on brand architecture: integrative 	
8 experiential & symbolic		5 multiple benefits		
		relational & functional		6
2	Symbolic	7	Functional	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumer benefit: self-esteem & self-presentation • prevailing processing style: biased processing • effect on brand architecture: separative (target groups) 		symb. & functl.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumer benefit: problem avoidance • prevailing processing style: central processing • effect on brand architecture: integrative 	

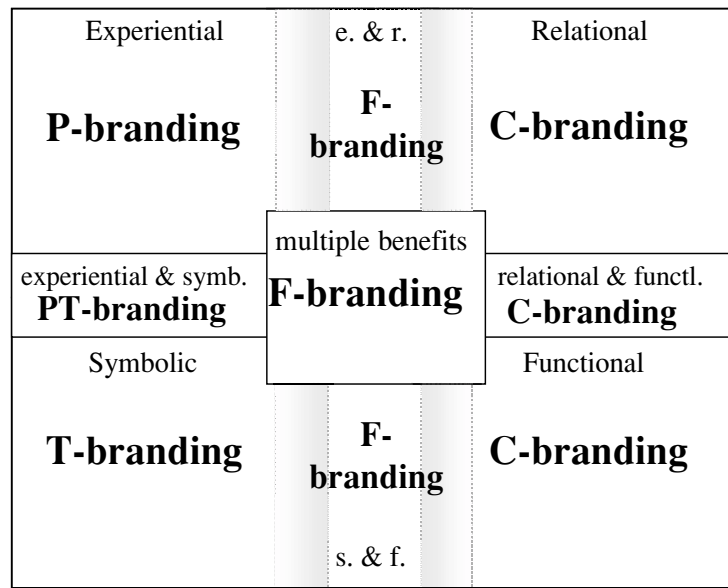
commitment to generally accepted social values (e.g., social responsibility, sponsoring) and advertising techniques of emotional conditioning (e.g., through pictures or music). These associations serve to build up sympathy for the brand without—in contrast to symbolic brand concepts—polarizing customers. This form of brand concept is frequently used by market leaders or in product categories where the degree of trust placed in a brand plays an important role (e.g. financial service providers). Relational brand concepts tend to be used in cases where there are either no central arguments in favor of the brand, or where the customer is not willing or unable to adequately assess such product differences (“peripheral processing”, e.g., Petty and Cacioppo 1986). As is the case with functional concepts, relational brand concepts are assumed to work integratively as far as the brand architecture strategy is concerned: In contrast to symbolic brand positioning, identification with the brand is not motivated by the desire to be different, but rather by the desire to belong socially. Relational brands therefore work with integrative advertising appeals such as generally accepted social norms or genetically determined stimulus-response mechanisms to ensure that no gap emerges between the brand’s various target groups. On the other hand, the emotional attachment to the brand is also a positive signal of trustworthiness that can be applied to a variety of products.

Two remarks need to be added. Firstly, strategic brand concepts are not linked to specific products. Functional, experiential, relational or symbolic concepts can be applied to most products. For example, a watch can be mainly functional (e.g. Timex) or can be positioned symbolically (e.g. Rolex, see Park et al. 1991). Secondly, most real brands do not correspond to the ideal “pure” forms, but are a mixture of two or more of these concepts (fields 5 to 9 in Figure 2). For example, most car brands constitute mixed forms of functional (e.g., reliability), symbolic (e.g., prestige), relational (e.g., patriotism) or experiential (e.g., comfort or the pleasure of driving) brand concepts.

BASE-LINKING STRATEGIC BRAND CONCEPT TO BRAND ARCHITECTURE STRATEGY

Building on the four strategic brand concepts and the corresponding consumer benefits and styles of thinking, the Brand Architecture Strategy Explorer (BASE) is proposed as an instrument to explore and identify an appropriate brand architecture strategy (figure 3). Companies whose positioning on the markets they serve is purely or mostly functional are assumed to benefit from a C-branding strategy, as is frequently the case in the technical goods sector (e.g., Panasonic, General Electrics, IBM). The common image denominator between products in closely linked product categories can evoke relatively specific product associations. The wider the product range, the more abstract the common values of the C-brand will be (e.g., Dawar and Anderson 1994, p. 128; Klink and Smith 2001, p. 329). Provided there are no incompatibilities of a symbolic or experiential nature, C-brands can unite a wide range of products under one roof, as consumers can get used to extensions which may seem unusual initially (e.g., Klink and Smith 2001). For example, the Yamaha name can be found on tennis rackets and Panasonic is associated with bicycles, whereas the General Electrics brand covers hundreds of different products from jet engines to power generation, from financial services to plastics as well as from television to medical imaging. As long as the common denominator of the brand schema is appropriate and important in all of the product categories covered by the brand (e.g., Bridges 1992), integration via a functional C-brand strengthens brand awareness and brand trust. In the case of large submarkets and a high degree of product and target group heterogeneity, it can, however, be worthwhile complementing an abstract C-brand with specific subbrands at product or target group level (e.g., Ford and Focus, Mustang, Taurus etc.). In this case, there is some overlap between C-branding and F-branding (see the grey shaded area between the dotted lines in figure 3).

FIGURE 3
BASE—Linking Strategic Brand Concept To Brand Architecture Strategy



The same is true for companies with a portfolio consisting of products with a relational positioning as well as for a product portfolio with a mixture of functional and relational concepts (cf. e.g., Johnson & Johnson), as both concepts do not give rise to any incompatibilities between the various products offered or target groups served. However, in this case as well, too high a degree of product heterogeneity might make it seem expedient to create subbrands for larger submarkets in addition to the C-brand, which once again overlaps with F-branding.

If the range of a company’s offerings includes a number of concepts with various symbolic traits, BASE recommends a T-branding strategy. These symbolic target group brands can include a wide range of products. For example, luxury brands like Gucci, Cartier, Louis Vuitton or Giorgio Armani have little difficulty in uniting a great variety of products under one brand, as long as the image of the typical brand users is uniform and continues in the direction desired by the target group (cf. Kapferer 1997; Park, Lawson, and Milberg 1989; Park et al. 1991). Difficulties arise whenever such brands mix up different target groups or do not protect their clients from non-clients. For example, the Chanel brand severely suffered from its Chanel T-shirts that were sold in large quantities and ended up being worn by too many women (Kapferer 1997, p. 256). Likewise, the BOSS brand, formerly targeted predominantly at male customers, recently found it very difficult to enter the market of women’s business wear. Sometimes, symbolic incompatibilities may be rather subtle in nature: When the Emminence brand, positioned as “for the tough man”, tried to extend its brand name from men’s underwear to elegant perfumes “for the fashionable gentleman”, it caused severe irritation among its customers and eventually altered its strategy. The transition to F-branding is smooth in this case, too. Provided the groups targeted are not too heterogeneous, but the costs of brand management are high in comparison to the consumers’ willingness to pay a premium for the added symbolic value of the brand, it can make sense to integrate target markets to a certain extent through hierarchical F-branding.

BASE proposes a P-branding strategy for a range of offerings with different experiential characteristics. Even if the product categories covered by such P-brands can be very broad on occasion (e.g. all sweet-tasting foodstuffs), they are limited by the physical properties of the product category due to their experiential nature, as both laboratory research and real-life examples demonstrate. In laboratory experiments, subjects appeared to be reluctant to try Crest chewing gum for fear that it would taste like toothpaste, did not like a hypothetical Heineken popcorn extension, and were suspicious of McDonald’s film processing, believing that the films would be developed quickly but would be greasy (e.g., Aaker and Keller 1990; Sullivan 1990, p. 311). In real life, the Natreen brand was successfully extended to jam as well as to fruit-juice, but failed to convince customers of the quality of its diet sausage as the latter product category was incompatible with the association of sweetness that dominates brand associations (Schiele 1999). However, as long as the brand does not make symbolic promises in addition to experiential ones (as would be the case with, e.g., gift confectionery), using the same brand name for very different target groups, as illustrated above, should not present a problem (e.g. sweets for young and old).

If a company’s product range includes combinations of symbolic and experiential brand concepts (e.g., Dom Perignon champagne, Martini vermouth), it should turn to PT-branding, the most separative (and most costly) form of brand architecture. Otherwise, the brands will either lose their symbolic credibility (as is the case with P-brands) or their experiential character (T-brands).

Mixtures of symbolic or experiential brand concepts, on the one hand, and functional or relational concepts, on the other, as well as mixtures which contain three or all four of these added value components (e.g., most car brands), require the complex brand architecture of F-branding, integrating a diverse range of combinations of C-, P-, T- and PT-brands in a hierarchical concept. If we intend, for example, to target a certain number of groups with different symbolic demands, but with the same high functional demands, a functional C-brand is recommended as a guarantee of

technological expertise and quality, beneath which T-subbrands can be distinguished symbolically for different target groups. Which of these levels is given stronger emphasis will depend on the weighting of functional and symbolic buying motives. If symbolic motives dominate, an endorsing C-brand is recommended together with strong symbolic T-subbrands (cf. Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000, p. 104). If the functional motive has the upper hand, a strong C-brand is recommended as a “master brand”, with supplementary T-subbrands.

DISCUSSION

By linking five brand architecture strategies with the strategic brand concept model and with human information processing models, the Brand Architecture Strategy Explorer proposes standard brand architecture strategies for various combinations of strategic brand concepts. The considerations that have gone into BASE incorporate a significant number of empirical studies, which are summarized in the form of a uniform model.

Some considerable limits should be noted on the theoretical side. Firstly, the standard strategies in BASE maximize the success of the company’s brand(s) in customer terms. They do not involve further consideration of the company’s positioning with regard to other stakeholder groups such as current or future employees or shareholders. All in all, the involvement of additional stakeholders in brand architecture strategy is an even stronger argument in favor of C-branding (e.g. Meffert et al. 2002). On the other hand, the goal of avoiding channel conflicts or the intention to capitalize on consumer heterogeneity in price sensitivity through price differentiation are arguments in favor of a higher number of brands than BASE would recommend (e.g., Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000). Secondly, BASE is based on a typical cost structure of different brand architectures, for which highly integrated brand architecture strategies are more cost-effective than highly separated strategies. The extent of this cost benefit can, however, vary from sector to sector, and the significance of this cost benefit depends, among other factors, on the size of the (sub)market and the price sensitivity of customers. Larger markets with less price-sensitive consumers in sectors where customer subgroups can be easily and selectively reached justify a higher number of brands. This results in a grey area in the standard strategy recommendations between C-branding and F-branding, and between P- or T-branding and F-branding. Thirdly, many companies have a mixture of functional, experiential, symbolic, and relational offerings and a brand architecture that has developed over time. Even in such cases, it is possible to develop strategy recommendations based on BASE. These strategies, for example, could unite the products with functional or relational emphasis through C- or F-branding, complemented by some isolated T- or P-brands. Finally, BASE is a model based on psychological assumptions, which may only be valid in western cultures. In eastern cultures, for example, the motive for symbolic consumption tends to be the desire to belong rather than to be different (e.g., Markus and Kitayama 1991; Markus et al. 1996). This could explain the emergence of very broad C-brands in Japan (e.g., Kapferer 1999, p. 128).

All in all, BASE is an explorative instrument that can provide assistance in making strategic brand architecture decisions, bearing in mind its limitations. However, it does not replace the fine-tuning required in the specific design of the brand architecture, nor the particular caution to be exercised when crossing cultural boundaries.

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Consumer Responses to Discontinuance of Favorite Products: An Exploratory Study

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

How many varieties of laundry detergent do we really need? This question and others like it have become the center of recent debate among manufacturers, retailers, and marketing scholars. Trends in the marketing environment have led to product proliferation, followed by pruning of brands, creating a highly unstable "product churning" situation. Consumers are presented with a confusing, crowded, and constantly shifting landscape of products from which to make selections.

This unstable marketing environment makes it increasingly likely that consumers will encounter the discontinuance of preferred product alternatives. Although brand and line extensions have been studied extensively by researchers, the *withdrawal* of products from the market has received little attention, despite its growing frequency. Existing research on the topic has focused primarily on the impact of attributes of phantom alternatives (Farquhar & Pratkanis, 1993) and on the role of psychological reactance (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). The impact of affect, and of the customer's prior relationship with the brand, has received little attention, despite the fact that consumers' descriptions of product discontinuance events are often extremely emotion-laden.

This research increases our understanding of consumer responses to product discontinuance events, with particular attention given to emotional and behavioral responses and judgments of responsibility. As a first step in this process, consumers' stories of product discontinuance experiences were collected using the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954). 145 subjects responded to a series of open-ended questions about a memorable discontinuance experience. Their recollections were analyzed for common trends and themes. The products mentioned by subjects encompassed a wide variety of product categories, with notable differences in the categories mentioned most frequently by males (fast food and non-alcoholic beverages) and females (toiletries, perfume, and cosmetics).

Product unavailability situations reported included *geographic unavailability* (in which the subject moved to another region or country and could no longer obtain the product), *cyclic unavailability* (in which the product is regularly withdrawn and re-introduced, as with the McDonald's McRib sandwich), *elimination of an entire brand*, *elimination of an entire category* (for example, eight track tapes), and *product line contraction*, in which the discontinued product alternative belongs to a branded product line. This last category was the most often reported, representing 68% of the incidents. In product line contraction situations, consumers' reactions to the withdrawal of the discontinued alternative may influence future evaluation of, and loyalty towards, the brand, making these incidents particularly relevant for further study.

Subjects reported a wide variety of emotional responses to the discontinuance incident, with anger and sadness being the most common affective responses mentioned. The tendency to respond with anger appeared to increase with duration of product use before its discontinuance. Different types of losses incurred were also mentioned. The most often-mentioned losses were of ease of choice (due to the need to incur additional search costs in the category) and utility (if the discontinued alternative had unique features unavailable in any other available product). Mentions were also made of loss of self-concept (typically associated with perfumes and scented products), diminished ability to perform (typically associated with sports equipment), and losses of connections to others or to the past.

Subjects were also asked why they believed the product had been withdrawn. A variety of reasons were offered, low sales

volume being the most frequently mentioned explanation. Several other explanations were proposed, including replacement of the product by a new version which did not possess the attributes valued in the original, failure on management's part to promote the product correctly, lack of retailer support, and shifting consumer tastes. The data offered some preliminary evidence to suggest that explanations attributing either willful behavior ("change for its own sake") or incompetence (failure to promote the product) to the manufacturer were more likely to be associated with angry emotional responses. This finding, if supported by future research, would be consistent with Weiner's (1995) work on judgments of responsibility, blame, and the incidence of anger.

Subjects were asked to report purchase behavior before the preferred alternative became available (if they were able to remember such a time), and also their purchase choices after the preferred alternative was discontinued. The patterns of subjects who reported product line contraction events were analyzed, and the following patterns emerged:

- (1) After discontinuance of a preferred product alternative, subjects in this study selected an alternative from a different brand more often than they selected another alternative within the same brand (43% to 34%, with the remainder exiting the category or switching between brands with no reported preference).
- (2) Subjects who had switched to the discontinued product from another product in the same brand (i.e., from one type of Pantene shampoo to another that became their favorite) were more likely to select an alternative within the brand after discontinuance than to switch. Even among these subjects, though, 42% either switched to another brand or cycled between brands frequently with no reported preference.

It is difficult from these data to identify the reason for the brand switching behavior observed. The search for preferred product attributes may offer a satisfactory explanation; however, it is also possible that discontinuance experiences may damage the consumer-brand relationship (Fournier, 1998), making a previously loyal consumer more prone to defect to another brand.

While statistical inferences should not be drawn from these data, which among other things may suffer from retrospective bias, the patterns identified in these incident reports suggest that discontinued product alternatives have affective consequences for consumers which may lead to behavioral consequences relevant to marketers. Further research should study these patterns in more detail. In particular, it would be helpful to marketers to understand the impact of marketing communications when discontinuing a product on consumers' judgments of motives and intent, and on subsequent brand loyalty. While this research by no means intends to suggest that product should never be discontinued, it may be possible to identify strategies to minimize negative consequences for manufacturers and their brands, while still pruning unprofitable offerings from their product lines.

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Processing General versus Specific Brand Information: The Influence of Relationship Norms in Consumers' Choice of Processing Strategies

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Recent work has shown that sometimes consumers cross the threshold of commercial transactions and bring the brand 'alive' by giving it quasi-human qualities (Fournier 1998; Aaker 1997; McGill 1998). More recently, Aggarwal (2001) finds that consumers' evaluation of a brand is influenced by the norms of relationship that are salient at the time of brand evaluation. In the present research, we extend prior work on consumer-brand relationships to investigate differences in information processing strategies adopted by consumers depending on the type of relationship that they perceive with the brand.

We study two types of relationships, adopting a distinction developed by Clark and Mills (1993) between communal relationships, in which concern for a partner's need is paramount (for example, relationships with friends and family members) and exchange relationships, in which a matched benefit is expected back from the partner (for example, relationship between business partners). There is substantial evidence that people's information processing strategies are influenced by a variety of situational and contextual factors in which the decisions are made, for example, experimental instructions (Meyers-Levy 1991), competitive ads (Malaviya, Kisielius and Sternthal 1996), level of involvement (Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann 1983), motivation to achieve an outcome (Crowe and Higgins 1997), age-differences (Koutstaal and Schacter 1997) and cultural orientation (Nisbett, Peng, Choi and Norenzayan 2001).

Our thesis that different relationship types will be associated with alternative information processing strategies is based on the premise that an exchange orientation will be associated with greater item-specific encoding of brand information whereas a communal orientation will result in more holistic processing. Prior work (Clark 1984) has found that people working on a task jointly with their partner were more likely to keep track of their own inputs separately from their partner's when in an exchange relationship but attend more to information about others' needs when in a communal relationship. Presumably, keeping track of inputs in exchange relationships is done in order to allocate the final benefits in proportion to the inputs but such record keeping is unnecessary in communal relationships where benefits are distributed according to partners' needs. As a result, we expect exchange oriented consumers to keep close track of specific attributes of the brand since only that can enable them to track the balance between inputs and outcomes from brand consumption. Additionally, we expect communal consumers not to do such a close scrutiny of specific brand attributes but instead to attend more to information about overall brand benefits to assess if the brand satisfies their needs.

Across three studies we test the overall hypothesis that consumers with a communal orientation towards a brand are more likely to attend to general brand information relative to exchange consumers who attend to every nitty-gritty detail. All three studies are scenario-based laboratory experiments.

In Study 1, relationship norms were first manipulated using an inter-personal interaction situation. Participants then read a short passage about a fictitious clothing store, described using both specific as well as general information. Later, the participants took a four-alternative multiple-choice recognition test. There were six questions in all each with four choices consisting of a *correct*

specific, correct general, plausible inference, and incorrect response. Since we expect the exchange-oriented participants to attend more to specific brand details, we hypothesized such participants to show higher rates of acceptance for correct specific responses, and higher rejection of incorrect responses relative to communal participants. Results supported this prediction. In addition, we hypothesized that since communal participants attend to general brand information, they would show higher rates of acceptance of correct general responses relative to exchange participants. This hypothesis was not supported. There are two alternative explanations for these results. First, it was possible that contrary to our prediction, an exchange orientation does not make people differentiate between specific and general brand information. Instead, this orientation prompts individuals to attend to all brand information equally deeply. Alternatively, it is possible that exchange participants do indeed attend primarily to specific brand information at encoding, but use their specific brand knowledge to correctly construct responses about general brand information.

Study 2 explored these two alternative hypotheses with the help of an additional measure, namely, recognition response latencies. We reasoned that since recognition requires search and retrieval from memory, if respondents are actively constructing the general brand information, the time required to complete such a task would be long, and should reflect, to a large extent, memory construction. However, if the general brand information had been encoded as such, and not based on construction, then participants should respond quickly. Thus, we expected the response time measure to be particularly revealing of information processing strategies in that communally oriented individuals relative to their exchange counterparts, were expected to take less time to identify the correct general information and plausible inferences. Recognition performance replicated the results of Study 1 and the response latency measure confirmed our predictions: exchange orientation resulted in significantly slower responses to the general information and plausible inferences compared to a communal orientation. Together, these results suggest that exchange orientation prompt people to attend primarily to brand specific information whereas a communal orientation makes people attend mainly to general information about a brand.

The first two studies manipulated the relationship norms using a scenario independent of the brand context. Even though such a manipulation provides a conservative test of the theory, we wanted to ratify the results with a brand-specific manipulation. In addition to this, in Study 3 we used a conjoint like experiment to evaluate people's relative weights for general and specific brand attributes. Results were consistent with the findings of the first two studies, that is, communal participants put greater weight (part-worth) on general but not on specific brand attributes.

In summary, results of the three studies offer insights about how the type of relationship, that consumers have with a brand, influences the way in which they process information about that brand.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Investigating Links between Consumption Emotions and Behavior

Adam Duhachek, Northwestern University

SESSION OVERVIEW

This session presented research examining the relationship between emotional states and behavior. Consonant with recent consumer research suggesting that emotions impact behavior and attitude, this session explored the nexus between consumer affect and behavior across an array of behavioral phenomena. The three papers in the session investigated links between emotions and conscious behavioral processes, as well as more subtle relationships existing between emotions and non-conscious processes. This session contributed to extant understanding of emotion's influence on consumers by focusing on emotions as both an antecedent and consequence of, consumer phenomena (papers 2 & 3).

The first paper by Duhachek and Iacobucci considered how consumer emotions and stress appraisals influence choice of coping strategies across two studies. The first study considered how consumer emotions resulting from a service encounter interact with stress appraisals to affect consumer's choice of particular coping strategies. Drawing from cognitive theories of emotions, hypotheses are formulated identifying unique influences of two negative consumption emotions (anger and threat) on coping. A second study replicates these relationships in the context of sports fans coping with a defeat in a highly publicized college football game. This study provides additional support for the hypotheses as well as a dynamic view of coping, where specific emotional reactions influence coping strategy selection over time.

In the second paper, Ramanathan and Williams examined mixed emotional responses to impulsive consumption, specifically focusing on the interaction between immediate (hedonic) and delayed (self-conscious) emotions (Giner-Sorolla 2001) and their influence on future behavior. In the first experiment, both impulsive and prudent consumers are induced into impulsive behavior via a priming manipulation. Emotional responses are measured immediately after engagement in the impulsive act, as well as one day later. Results show that hedonic emotions prevail in the short-run among all consumers. However, these are mixed with self-conscious emotions among prudent consumers. After one day, however, those short-term hedonic emotions decay for both groups, leaving only prudent consumers with a negative trace. This in turn, reduces intentions for prudent consumers to re-engage in the same impulsive behavior, relative to impulsive consumers. A second experiment finds that giving prudent consumers the opportunity to engage in a utilitarian (versus impulsive) behavior, after an initial act of impulsive consumption, reduces their experience of self-conscious emotions immediately after the impulsive act. Finally, a third experiment examines the degree to which mixed emotional responses to impulsive acts impact future actions in the same versus different behavioral domains.

In the third paper, Chartrand examined the consequences of non-consciously pursued goal states. Once a nonconscious goal is activated and pursued, individuals either succeed or fail at this goal, and this can have downstream consequences. Studies presented suggested that succeeding at nonconscious goals leads to positive "mystery moods", whereas failing leads to negative "mystery moods". The consequences of these mystery moods for self-enhancement, aggression, and performance were discussed, along with the implications of this research for consumer choice and emotion.

SHORT ABSTRACTS

"An Examination of the Relationship between Emotions, Appraisals and Coping,"

Adam Duhachek, Northwestern University

Dawn Iacobucci, Northwestern University

The growing consumer literature on consumption emotions and coping has documented a diverse array of strategies consumers employ to cope with emotion-arousing consumption episodes. This research examines the premise that the experience of certain emotions implicates the choice of certain coping strategies. We demonstrate that specific negative consumption emotions systematically predict consumers' choice of particular coping strategies. Data from two studies are presented to show that consumers' choice of coping strategies differ as a function of their predominant emotional reaction. The research also finds that consumers' perceived level of coping efficacy moderates the influence of emotions on coping. These findings are discussed in the context of recent research demonstrating emotional influences on consumer behavior.

"Oops, Will I Do It Again? Mixed Emotions After Impulsive Behaviors,"

Suresh Ramanathan, University of Chicago

Patti Williams, University of Pennsylvania

Impulsive behaviors are often accompanied by mixed emotions where pleasure mingles with guilt. We investigate how these emotions evolve differentially across time among impulsive and prudent people and how such differences manifest in the likelihood of engaging in similar behaviors. We show that prudent people are most likely to experience intense ambivalence immediately after an impulsive act. Presenting such people with an opportunity to "launder" their emotional ambivalence by engaging in a subsequent utilitarian behavior reduces feelings of conflict.

"Mystery Moods: The Consequences of Success and Failure at Nonconscious Goal Pursuit"

Tanya Chartrand, Ohio State University

Although individuals are often cognizant of deliberately choosing goals and engaging in goal-driven behavior, goals can also be automatically activated by features of the immediate environment and nonconsciously pursued (e.g., Chartrand & Bargh, 1996). This includes consumer-related goals, which can be primed to guide consumer behavior outside of one's conscious awareness and intent (Shiv, Huber, & Chartrand, in progress). Once a nonconscious goal is activated and pursued, individuals either succeed or fail at this goal, and this can have downstream consequences. Studies presented will suggest that succeeding at nonconscious goals leads to positive "mystery moods", whereas failing leads to negative "mystery moods". The consequences of these mystery moods for self-enhancement, aggression, and performance will be discussed, as will the implications of this research for consumer choice and emotion.

Effects of Consumer Ethnocentrism and Product Knowledge on Consumers' Utilization of Country-of-Origin Information

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ABSTRACT

This article is concerned with the effects of consumer ethnocentrism and product knowledge on consumers' utilization of country-of-origin information for their product evaluation. The data suggest that, regardless of consumers' ethnocentrism, low-knowledge consumers' product attitude is more strongly influenced by country-of-origin perception than high-knowledge consumers' product attitude.

The data also show that, when domestic and foreign products are given as alternatives, regardless of consumers' knowledge, low-ethnocentric consumers' product attitude is influenced by country-of-origin perception; however, high-ethnocentric consumers' product attitude is not influenced by country-of-origin perception.

Previous studies on the role played by the country-of-origin in consumers' evaluation of products have revealed that consumers tend to utilize extrinsic cues, such as information about the country-of-origin, as alternatives to intrinsic product attribute information when the latter is unavailable or when little useful information is yielded (Heimbach et al. 1989; Hong and Wyer 1989; Johansson 1988; Maheswaran 1994; Olson and Jacoby 1972; Szybillo and Jacoby 1974). As such, these studies have pointed out that country-of-origin information plays the role of a proxy variable for intrinsic product attribute information.

When this approach is applied to product knowledge, the argument goes that low-knowledge consumers with little ability to process intrinsic product information will be more likely to utilize stereotypical information regarding the country of origin when evaluating products. In other words, these studies have identified a negative relationship between consumers' product knowledge and their utilization of country-of-origin information (Hong and Toner 1989; Maheswaran 1994; Petty and Cacioppo 1981).

On the other hand, others have suggested that high-knowledge consumers are more likely to utilize country-of-origin information when conducting their product evaluation. Thus, these scholars have identified a positive relationship between consumers' product knowledge and their utilization of country-of-origin information (Heimbach et al. 1989; Johansson 1988; Johansson et al. 1985; Johansson and Nebenzahl 1986). In sum, previous research regarding the relationship between consumers' product knowledge and their utilization of country-of-origin information has yielded contradictory results.

Conversely, previous research on the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on consumer behavior indicates that high-ethnocentric consumers arrive at unreasonably favorable evaluations of domestic products vis-à-vis imported products (Bilkey and Nes 1982; Han and Terpstra 1988; Johansson et al. 1985; Sharma et al. 1995; Wall and Heslop 1986; White 1979). Consumer ethnocentrism derives from the more general construct of ethnocentrism, which is defined as people viewing their in-group as central, as possessing proper standards of behavior, and as offering protection against apparent threats from out-groups (Brislin 1993).

However, there has not yet been any research on the effects of consumer ethnocentrism on their utilization of country-of-origin information. If we examine the role of consumer ethnocentrism

from the perspective of country-of-origin information, when both domestic and foreign products are provided as alternatives, high-ethnocentric consumers' evaluation of products will not necessarily be influenced by their perception of country-of-origin information. In other words, consumer ethnocentrism is likely to hinder country-of-origin information from working as a proxy variable for intrinsic product attribute information.

This paper delves into the effects of consumer ethnocentrism and product knowledge on consumers' utilization of country-of-origin information when conducting their product evaluation. First, previous studies on the effects of consumers' product knowledge on their utilization of country-of-origin information will be analyzed in order to synthesize the conflicting results achieved by previous research. Second, this paper will look into the question of the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on their utilization of country-of-origin information. In sum, this study will attempt to analyze, both theoretically and empirically, facets that have been overlooked in previous research on country-of-origin.

EFFECT OF PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE ON THE UTILIZATION OF COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN INFORMATION

Petty and Cacioppo (1981), who developed the Elaboration Likelihood Model, argue that low-knowledge consumers are more dependent on country-of-origin information when they evaluate products; accordingly, in their ELM, they argue that country-of-origin information works as peripheral routes, or clues. Hong and Toner (1989) found that women consumers are more dependent on country-of-origin information than men consumers when evaluating masculine products (for example, automobiles); on the contrary, men consumers are more dependent on country-of-origin information than women when evaluating feminine products (for example, hygiene products). Based on this, they argue that low-knowledge consumers are more dependent on country-of-origin information when conducting their product evaluation. For his part, Maheswaran (1994) analyzed the moderating role of consumers' objective product knowledge in order to verify the effects of message strength and country-of-origin image on product evaluation. His study revealed that when consumers' knowledge is high only message strength affects their product evaluation. Contrarily, when consumers' knowledge is low, only country-of-origin information affects their product evaluation. In essence, these studies indicate the existence of a negative relationship between consumers' product knowledge and their utilization of country-of-origin information.

In contrast, research undertaken by Johansson and his colleagues (Johansson 1988; Johansson et al. 1985; Johansson and Nebenzahl 1986) has identified a positive relationship between consumers' product knowledge, or familiarity with the product, and their utilization of country-of-origin information. To explain this positive relationship, Johansson (1988) argues that, the more familiar a person is with a product, the higher the possibility that he/she will use country-of-origin information.

Park (2001) argues that these contradictory research results are caused by the use of different methodologies. As such, previous research showing a negative relationship between product knowledge and the utilization of country-of-origin information is primarily based on the use of objective methods to measure product knowledge. Contrarily, previous research exhibiting a positive relationship

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between product knowledge and the utilization of country-of-origin information is based on the use of subjective familiarity to measure product knowledge. If the suitability of research methods is compared, the likeliness grows that the argument posited by those advocating a negative relationship will emerge as the more valid one.

In the same vein, we can expect a negative relationship to emerge between product knowledge and fluctuations in favorable and unfavorable attitudes toward a product. Thus, low-knowledge consumers who have little ability to process intrinsic product information will more heavily depend on their perception of stereotypical information regarding the country of origin when conducting their product evaluation. As a result, low-knowledge consumers may evaluate a product made in a country with a high image more favorably than high-knowledge consumers. In addition, they may evaluate a product made in a country with a low image more unfavorably than high-knowledge consumers. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Low-knowledge consumers' product evaluation is more strongly influenced by their country-of-origin perception than high-knowledge consumers' evaluation of products

EFFECT OF CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM ON THE UTILIZATION OF COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN INFORMATION

Shimp and Sharma (1987) have noted that "consumer ethnocentrism gives the individual a sense of identity, feelings of belonging, and, most importantly, an understanding of what purchase behavior is acceptable or unacceptable to the in-group" (p. 280). Moreover, they argue that consumer ethnocentrism is closely correlated to patriotism, politico-economic conservatism, and dogmatism. For their part, Sharma, Shimp, and Shin (1995) maintain that consumer ethnocentrism is positively correlated to patriotic and conservative attitudes, but has a negative correlation with cultural openness. Accordingly, a consumer who has a high ethnocentric tendency will be dogmatic and not open to foreign cultures, and as such he/she will have generally unfavorable attitudes toward foreign culture and products.

As mentioned above, consumer ethnocentrism derives from the more general construct of ethnocentrism, which can be defined as people viewing their in-group as central, as possessing proper standards of behavior, and as offering protection against apparent threats from out-groups (Brislin 1993). As Klein, Ettenson, and Morris (1998, p.90) have noted, "Shimp and Sharma (1987) apply ethnocentrism to the study of marketing and consumer behavior and have coined the term "consumer ethnocentric tendencies" to represent beliefs held by consumers regarding the appropriateness and morality of purchasing foreign made products." Previous research on the effects of consumer ethnocentrism on consumer behavior has revealed that high-ethnocentric consumers make unreasonably favorable evaluations of domestic products vis-à-vis imported products (Bilkey and Nes 1982; Han and Terpstra 1988; Johansson et al. 1985; Sharma et al. 1995; Wall and Heslop 1986; White 1979). Accordingly, it can be predicted that consumer ethnocentrism will most likely have a negative influence on consumers' attitudes toward foreign products.

Moreover, when the impact of consumers' ethnocentrism and perception of the country of origin on their attitude toward a certain product are considered simultaneously, consumer ethnocentrism is likely to offset the impact of the perception of the country-of-origin. Put differently, high ethnocentric consumers' are likely to have a

less favorable attitude toward foreign products than domestic ones; and this despite the fact that their perception of the country of origin of the product in question may be higher than their perception of their own country. Based on the above, the following hypotheses are presented:

Hypothesis 2a: When domestic and foreign products are provided as alternatives, low-ethnocentric consumers' attitude toward products is influenced by their country-of-origin perception.

Hypothesis 2b: When domestic and foreign products are provided as alternatives, high-ethnocentric consumers' attitude toward products is not influenced by their country-of-origin perception.

METHOD

Subjects

Two hundred and seven undergraduate students from the management department participated in a study on the evaluation of new products. As compensation for their participation, each individual was given \$3 worth of food tickets to be used in the university cafeteria. The subjects of this study were placed into groups of ten or less.

Stimulus Materials

The following three criteria were considered when selecting the stimulus material. First, in order to assure that the subjects of the study could easily be classified as high-knowledge consumers or low-knowledge consumers, there had to be substantial variations in the level of knowledge about the product. Second, the product had to be sufficiently familiar to subjects, so that even low-knowledge consumers could comprehend and process the product information and message content. Third, the product had to be made and marketed by diverse foreign countries so that the country-of-origin variable could be manipulated. A pretest indicated that the camcorder category was likely to conform to all of the above criteria.

Only one variable—the country-of-origin—was manipulated when collecting the data for this study. Moreover, a pretest was administered in order to choose two foreign countries, one with a substantially higher product quality image than Korea and one with a lower product quality image, to whom the Korean camcorder makers could be compared. The pretest was administered to fifty undergraduate students. Five countries—Korea, U.S., Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan—were selected and the subjects were asked to, on a scale of one to five, reveal their perceptions of the quality of the camcorders made in each of these countries. The results revealed, as shown in Table 1, that Japan was regarded as being tops, Korea and the U.S. as being in the middle, while Hong Kong and Taiwan were seen as having relatively low quality levels when it came to the manufacturing of camcorders. Based on the pretest results, Japan was selected as the high quality image foreign country and Taiwan as the low quality image foreign country.

The country-of-origin variable was manipulated using stimulus advertisements. As such, three ad copies from each origin country—Korea, Japan, and Taiwan—were made and put in a booklet that was handed out to each subject.

Procedure

The subjects of the study were given booklets that contained a description of the study's purpose, the advertisement message, and the dependent variables. Subjects were then made to read the

TABLE 1
Results of Pretest for Country-of-Origin Perceptions

	Japan	U.S.	Korea	H.K.	Taiwan
Camcorder	4.75	3.97	3.88	2.85	2.76

first page of the booklet, which was explained to them as being a statement of the study's purpose. The subjects were then informed that they were among a group of people whose opinions were being solicited by the manufacturer of a new camcorder to be launched shortly. Once the subjects had read the statement, they were then made to read three advertisement copies at their own pace. After reading each ad, the subjects were asked to turn to the next page of the booklet and indicate their attitude toward the camcorder described in the ad based on a five-point Likert scale. These scales included two items regarding product quality, two items regarding general sympathy as well as one item regarding purchase intention. The Cronbach's α for these five items was 0.84, which is bigger than the critical level of 0.7 recommended by Nunnally (1978). Based on this, the average of the five items valence was used as the subjects' attitude toward the advertised product.

Next a manipulation check was administered. As part of this process the subjects were asked about their perception of the camcorder in the ad's country of origin. This manipulation check was followed by a three-item questionnaire designed to assess the subjects' subjective product knowledge, in this case of the camcorder. The subjects were asked to respond by choosing from three, five-point scales. The Cronbach's α for these three items was 0.78, thus also bigger than the critical level of 0.7 recommended by Nunnally (1978). In accordance with this, the average score for the three items was used as the subjects' product knowledge. Finally, the degree of consumer ethnocentrism displayed by the subjects was measured using the CETSCALE developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987). The subjects were asked to use 7-point Likert scales to note their reactions to the 17-item CETSCALE. The average for the 17-item CETSCALE was used to represent the subjects' degree of consumer ethnocentrism.

RESULTS

Product Knowledge

The classification of subjects as high-knowledge consumers or low-knowledge consumers was carried out first. As discussed above, the average score for the three items was used to represent the subjects' product knowledge. Moreover, the subjects were classified as high-knowledge consumers or low-knowledge consumers based on a median split of 2.9. As a result 104 people were classified as being high-knowledge consumers while 103 were listed as low-knowledge consumers.

Consumer Ethnocentrism

The classification of subjects as high-ethnocentric consumers and low-ethnocentric consumers was performed next. As mentioned above, the average for the 17-item CETSCALE was used to represent the subjects' degree of consumer ethnocentrism. In this case as well, the subjects were classified as being high-ethnocentric consumers or low-ethnocentric consumers based on a median split of 3.1. As a result 103 people were classified as being high-ethnocentric consumers while 104 were listed as low-ethnocentric consumers.

Manipulation Check

To check the effectiveness of the manipulation executed with the stimulus ad, an ANOVA was performed. The subjects' perception of the quality of the camcorder made by each country was analyzed to confirm whether there were any differences between the three origin countries. The average score for each country, with regards to the subjects' perception of product quality, was 4.8 for Japan, 3.8 for Korea, and 2.9 for Taiwan ($N=207$). The ANOVA performed on the average score for subjects' perception of product quality indicated the main role played by country-of-origin ($F(2, 204)=28.5, p<0.01$). This outcome offers evidence that the country-of-origin variable was manipulated successfully.

Demand bias problem may exist where a subject of an experiment responds to what s/he believes is desired of her/him by the experimenter. Sawyer (1975) denoted that artifacts such as suspiciousness of the experimenter's intent, willingness to participate, past experience, etc. can produce demand bias. There are several methods which can be employed to determine if demand bias exists. They include post-experimental inquiry, the non-experiment, manipulation of suspected demand cues. Post-experimental inquiry was employed in this research. A question, "what do you think is the purpose of this research?" was given on the last page of the questionnaire. No subjects grasped the genuine purposes of the research.

Product Attitude

Means for product attitudes categorized by product knowledge and consumer ethnocentrism are summarized in Table 2. To verify Hypothesis 1, the difference between the high-knowledge consumer group and the low-knowledge consumer group's attitudes toward products made in high-image country and low-image country was compared. As shown in Table 3, the high-knowledge consumers' attitude toward the camcorder made in Japan (PA_J) was 4.33, while the high-knowledge consumers' attitude toward the camcorder made in Taiwan (PA_T) was 2.52, for a difference of ($PA_J - PA_T$) 1.81. Meanwhile, low-knowledge consumers' attitude toward the camcorder made in Japan (PA_J) was 4.57, and low-knowledge consumers' attitude toward the camcorder made in Taiwan (PA_T) was 2.22, for a difference between the two ($PA_J - PA_T$) of 2.35. The pairwise t-test conducted on all pairs of origin countries, and found in Table 5, reveals that the subjects' attitudes toward products made in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are significantly different. Moreover, the result of a pairwise t-test conducted on high-knowledge consumers and low knowledge consumers with regards to the differences in their attitudes toward products made in Japan and Taiwan ($T=3.26, p<0.01$) demonstrates that low-knowledge consumers' evaluation of products is more strongly influenced by their country-of-origin perceptions than is the case with high-knowledge consumers. Accordingly, Hypothesis 1 is validated.

To verify Hypothesis 2a, low-ethnocentric subjects' attitude toward products made domestically, the high-image foreign country, and the low-image foreign country were compared. As shown in Table 4, the low-ethnocentric consumers' attitude toward the camcorder made in Japan (PA_J) scored 4.63, while their attitude

TABLE 2
Means for Product Evaluation Categorized by Product Knowledge and Consumer Ethnocentrism

	High-Knowledge Consumer (N=104)						Low-Knowledge Consumer (N=103)					
	High-Ethnocentric Consumer (N=52)			Low-Ethnocentric Consumer (N=52)			High-Ethnocentric Consumer (N=51)			Low-Ethnocentric Consumer (N=52)		
	Made in Japan	Made in Korea	Made in Taiwan	Made in Japan	Made in Korea	Made in Taiwan	Made in Japan	Made in Korea	Made in Taiwan	Made in Japan	Made in Korea	Made in Taiwan
Attitude Toward Product	4.25	4.45	2.51	4.41	3.27	2.52	4.28	4.46	2.23	4.85	3.28	2.21

TABLE 3
Means for Product Evaluation Categorized by Product Knowledge

	High-Knowledge Consumer (N=104)			Low-Knowledge Consumer (N=103)		
	Made in Japan (PA _J)	Made in Korea (PA _K)	Made in Taiwan (PA _T)	Made in Japan (PA _J)	Made in Korea (PA _K)	Made in Taiwan (PA _T)
Attitude Toward Product	4.33	3.86	2.52	4.57	3.87	2.22
	PA _J - PA _T =1.81			PA _J - PA _T =2.35		

toward the camcorder made in Korea (PA_K) scored 3.28, and Taiwan's (PA_T) 2.37. As discussed in a prior section, the pairwise t-test conducted on all pairs of origin countries, as seen in Table 5, demonstrates that the subjects' attitudes toward products made in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are significantly different. That is, the result shows that, when domestic and foreign products are provided as alternatives, low-ethnocentric consumers' product attitude follows the sequence of their country-of-origin perceptions (PA_J > PA_K > PA_T). Consequently, Hypothesis 2a is also validated.

In order to verify Hypothesis 2b, a comparison of the high-ethnocentric subjects' attitude toward products made domestically, in the high-image foreign country, and in the low-image foreign country was carried out. As shown in Table 4, the high-ethnocentric consumers' attitude toward the camcorder made in Japan (PA_J) was 4.27, while their attitude toward the camcorder made in Korea (PA_K) scored 4.46, and Taiwan's (PA_T) 2.37. Thus, the result indicates that, when domestic and foreign products are provided as alternatives, high-ethnocentric consumers' attitude toward products does not necessarily follow the sequence of their country-of-origin perceptions (PA_J < PA_K > PA_T). As high-ethnocentric consumers are usually dogmatic and not open to foreign cultures, it is highly likely that they will have generally unfavorable attitudes toward foreign culture and foreign made products. As a result, even though they perceived the quality of the camcorder made in Korea as being inferior to the one made in Japan, they nevertheless displayed a more favorable attitude toward the camcorder made in Korea. Therefore, Hypothesis 2b is also validated.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indirectly supports previous research showing a negative relationship between consumers' product knowledge and their utilization of country-of-origin information.

To be exact, by proving that low-knowledge consumers' evaluation of products is more strongly influenced by their country-of-origin perceptions than is the case with high-knowledge consumers, the negative relationship between consumers' product knowledge and their utilization of country-of-origin information is partially confirmed. As Figure 1 indicates, the product attitude curve of low-knowledge consumers is steeper than that of high-knowledge consumers.

The results of this study also indicate that consumer ethnocentrism does interact with country-of-origin perceptions. As Figure 2A makes clear, when the quality of a domestic product is perceived as being superior to that of a foreign product, as is the case with the camcorder made in Korea and the one made in Taiwan, the product attitude curve of high-ethnocentric consumers is steeper than that of low-ethnocentric consumers. Namely, when the quality of domestic products is perceived as being superior to that of foreign products, consumer ethnocentrism strengthens the impact of country-of-origin perceptions on consumers' product evaluation.

The results of this study also reveals that consumer ethnocentrism does interact with country-of-origin perception in an asymmetrical fashion. As Figure 2B demonstrates, when the quality of a domestic product is perceived as being inferior to that of a foreign product, as is the case with the camcorder made in Korea and the one made in Japan, the product attitude curve of high-ethnocentric consumers is the reverse of that of low-ethnocentric consumers. That is, when the quality of a domestic product is perceived as being inferior to that of a foreign product, consumer ethnocentrism does offset the impact of country-of-origin perceptions on consumers' product evaluation.

Two consumer behavior implications emerged from this research. One is that high-knowledge consumers and low-knowledge consumers differ in the extent to which they utilize country-of-

TABLE 4
Means for Product Evaluation Categorized by Consumer Ethnocentrism

	High-Ethnocentric Consumer (N=103)			Low-Ethnocentric Consumer (N=104)		
Attitude Toward Product	Made in Japan (PA _J)	Made in Korea (PA _K)	Made in Taiwan (PA _T)	Made in Japan (PA _J)	Made in Korea (PA _K)	Made in Taiwan (PA _T)
	4.27	4.46	2.37	4.63	3.28	2.37
	PA _J < PA _K > PA _T			PA _J > PA _K > PA _T		

TABLE 5
Pairwise Test of the Differences between Means

	PA _J - PA _K	PA _K - PA _T
Attitude Toward Product of High-Knowledge Consumer	3.28*	4.48*
Low-Knowledge Consumer	3.43*	6.75*
High-Ethnocentric Consumer	-3.01*	5.07*
Low-Ethnocentric Consumer	4.49*	3.56*

FIGURE 1

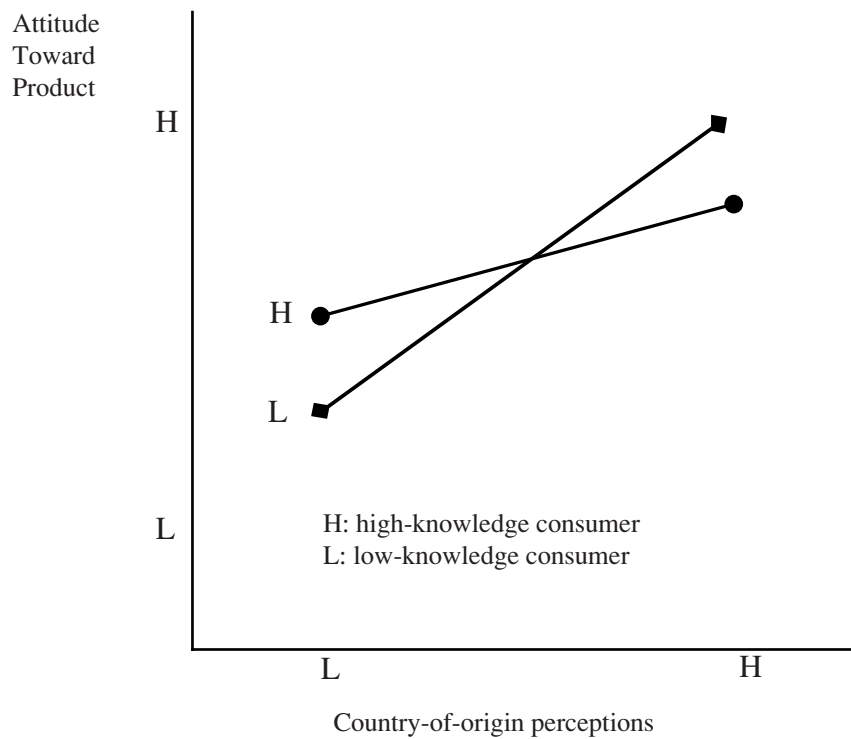


FIGURE 2A
when domestic product is perceived as superior

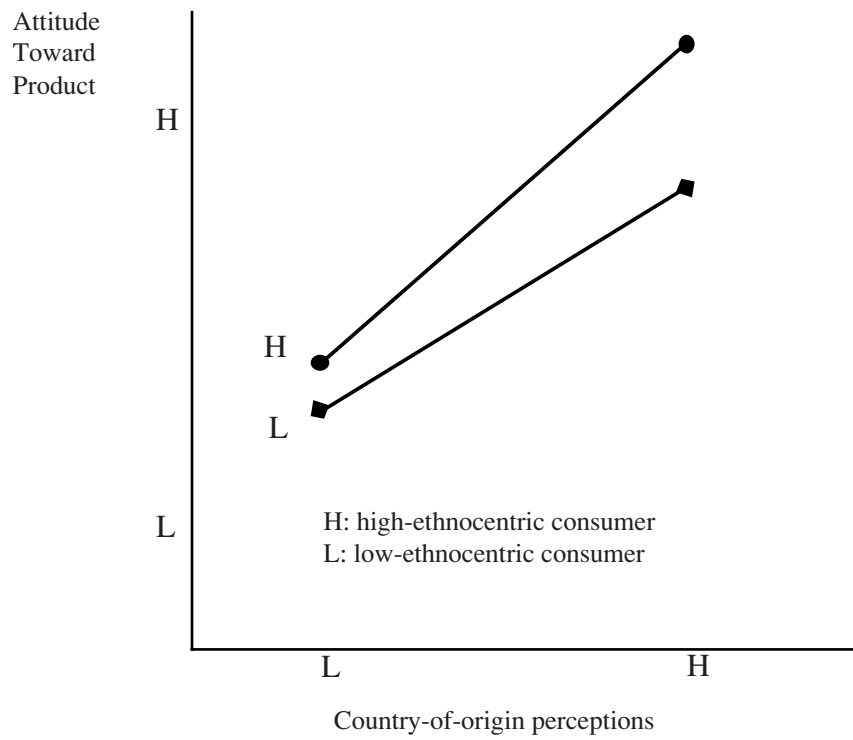
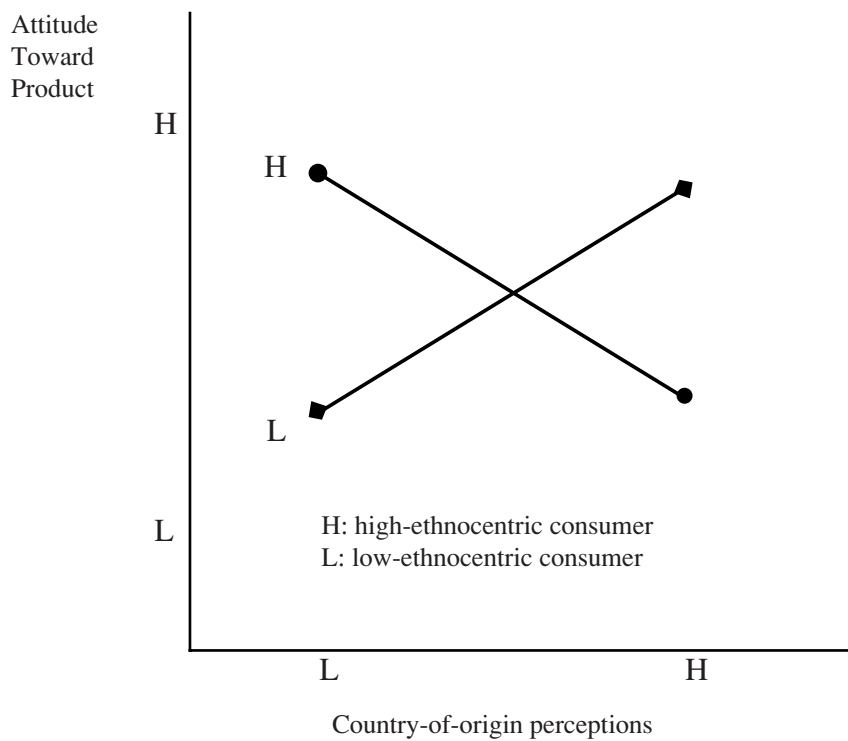


FIGURE 2B
when domestic product is perceived as being inferior



origin information when conducting their evaluation of a product. For experts, country-of-origin perceptions are not so critical because they possess enough information processing ability to process intrinsic cues. On the other hand, country-of-origin perceptions do swing novices' attitudes towards products because they do not have the level of ability required to process complex intrinsic cues.

The other implication is that there is a need to consider the effects of consumer ethnocentrism on their utilization of country-of-origin information. When domestic and foreign products are provided as alternatives, if we take into account the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on product evaluation, high-ethnocentric consumers' product evaluation may not necessarily be influenced by their country-of-origin perceptions.

Future research might further the present analysis by addressing issues that have emerged, but have not been resolved by this study. One such issue pertains to the question of whether consumers' product knowledge and consumer ethnocentrism have an interactive effect on their utilization of country-of-origin information. Another area of research of potential interest would be the examination of the effects of consumer motivation or of the various types of message on consumers' utilization of country-of-origin information.

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“Is It a Foreign Product?” A Scale to Classify Products in an Era of Globalization

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ABSTRACT

This paper defines *foreign product competence* as a base to classify products in an era of globalization. *Foreign product competence* is the knowledge required to adopt foreign products. It includes three dimensions: (1) product cultural uniqueness, (2) language, and (3) change behavior. *Foreign product competence* is the antecedent of expertise and the affective involvement. It indirectly influences attitude. However, *foreign product competence* is not related to the cognitive involvement. The scale distinguishes those products perceived as foreign from those perceived as non-foreign. The scale's managerial implications are discussed.

PRODUCT CLASSIFICATION DEVELOPMENT

The product classification approach is the hallmark of commodity school of marketing thought (Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett, 1988). The benefit of classifying products into homogeneous groups is that the same marketing tactics can be utilized for all products in that particular category. This approach usually provides pragmatic recommendations to marketing practitioners as well as insights to consumer behavior theory.

The bases to classify products have evolved since Copeland (1923). Based on *search behavior*, Copeland classified products into convenience, shopping and specialty goods. As consumer behavior theory developed, it was posited that *involvement* determines search behavior. Therefore, classifying products based on involvement became a better approach (Lastovicka, 1979). In high involvement cases, attitude preceded behavior; in low involvement cases, behavior preceded attitude (Rothschild, 1979). In addition to involvement, the FCB model (Vaughn, 1980, 1986; Ratchford, 1987) introduced *decision mode* to classify products into four groups: the high involvement/think, the high involvement/feel, the low involvement/think, and the low involvement/feel products. Hence, the bases to classify products have evolved from a tangible construct, behavior, to more abstract yet fundamental constructs, i.e. involvement and decision mode.

Recent research on involvement posits that cognitive structure is the underlying construct that determines involvement (Laaksonen, 1994). However, it has not attracted much attention to use cognitive constructs to classify products. Also, the relationship between cognitive structure and involvement is less defined. Some previous research posited that involvement influenced consumers' motivation to attend to and comprehend information; domain knowledge affected consumers' ability to process information (Celsi & Olson, 1988). Involvement and domain knowledge were expected to exert independent effects on consumers' information processing. Still, other research found that involvement was positively related to domain knowledge (Sujan, 1985).

This study has two objectives. The first is to develop a scale to classify products based on cognitive constructs in an era of globalization. The second is to investigate the relationships among knowledge, involvement and cross-cultural adoption intention.

CULTURE AS SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE

Cognitive anthropology holds the notion of cultures as systems of knowledge (D'Andrade, 1984). Culture refers to the cogni-

tive knowledge aggregated by people and accumulated over time within a culture (Resnick, 1991). A society's culture reflects what one ought to/ought not to do to be considered as a member of the community by other members. Members learn cultural knowledge through participation in cultural group activities. The structure of cultural knowledge systems is the result of the dynamic learning process (Roth and Moorman, 1988). Hence, "culture at once is constituted and constituting (Sherry, 1986)."

Consumer good are one of the locations of cultural meaning (McCracken, 1986). Products carry a repertoire of cultural information. Cultural practices, values and beliefs are accumulated in products within a cultural group. Through consumption, consumers acquire culture (McCracken, 1986; Oswald, 1999). Brand is also a cultural symbol (Aaker & Benet-Maartinez, 2001). "The meaning embedded in brands can serve to represent and institutionalize the values and beliefs of a culture." The dimensions of *brand personality* carry both specific and universal cultural meaning.

In cross-cultural consumption, consumers encounter unfamiliar products. There is little foreign product knowledge in their memory. In addition to rudimentary foreign product knowledge structure, product attributes are also not well-linked to relevant personal consequences nor values. In a cross-cultural consumption decision, learning new product knowledge and updating prior knowledge are more important than retrieving existing product knowledge, consequences, or values. Therefore, this paper posits that the knowledge associated with learning the foreign products can be a base to classify products.

CONSTRUCT DEFINITION

This study defines *foreign product competence* as the knowledge required to adopt foreign products. Here the term "product" is used in a broad sense. It refers to any object in an exchange transaction. The object includes product categories, services, ideas, religions, customs, and brands etc. Knowledge is a complex construct. This paper is not to exhaust the list of knowledge required to adopt foreign products. However, from reviewing relevant literatures, it is hypothesized that there are three types of knowledge most relevant in foreign product adoption:

The first dimension refers to the knowledge accumulated in the foreign products that the consumers have to learn to adopt them. Knowledge is classified into declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge (Anderson, 1976), and conditional knowledge (Alexander, Schallert & Hare, 1991). Declarative knowledge refers to knowledge of facts about the products, e.g. product attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Procedural knowledge is knowledge about how to do things, e.g. how to use Windows Office 2000 software. Conditional knowledge is knowledge to make judgment about when, where or under what conditions to take proper actions, e.g. business suits are proper for corporate meetings. This dimension includes the cognitive structure associated with the foreign products. It is the product knowledge structure shared by the foreign cultural members that defines the first dimension of *foreign product competence*. For example, the western consumers perceive that there is specific knowledge associated with tea ceremony practiced by Japanese consumers. Because of the multidimensional property of knowledge structure, this dimension may be a multi-facet construct itself.

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The second dimension is language. Language carries a repertoire of cultural knowledge (Goodenough, 1981). For example, the classification elements in language, the *classifiers*, provide specific schemes for classifying objects in the world. The culture classification schemes are inherent in the *classifiers* to organize external objects. Speakers of a language classify products differently from speakers of another language (Schmitt and Zhang, 1998). Language is also the communication media to transfer cultural knowledge, and the mediator of cultural identities (Northover, 1988). Language competence is the major dimension of bicultural competence (LaFromboise et. al., 1993). Language competence influences consumers' cross-cultural learning and communication processes. Therefore, products that demand the proficiency of a foreign language are considered more foreign than products that do not.

The third dimension refers to the dimension of change. The ability of acquiring more than one area of expertise within adjacent or radically different fields is one dimension of *professional expertise* (Van der Heijden, 2000; Van der Heijden and Verhelst, 2002). Professional experts are capable of developing a strategy to master a new area of expertise, i.e. to learn faster. Van der Heijden (2000) termed these experts as "flexperts." For example, expert computer programmers are able to respond quickly to changes in computer technology. However, novice programmers cannot bridge the gap easily. The ability to change may involve the ability to analyze information, and the ability to elaborate on given information (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987). Qualitative research found that a learning pattern could be developed as bicultural competent consumers exposed to different cultures over a period of time (Kao, 2002). Although the dimension of change is not directly related to foreign product knowledge itself, it influences learning processes. The more effort necessary to bridge the foreign product knowledge with consumers' existing knowledge, the more foreign the objects are to the consumers.

SCALE DEVELOPMENT

The scale development follows the procedures defined by Churchill (1979) and psychometric theory (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

1. Item Generation:

Two preliminary studies were conducted for item generation. The first study was two focus groups. One consisted of 4 subjects from western countries. The other consisted of 5 subjects from eastern countries. They ranged in age from 24 to 33. In these two focus group sessions, the subjects were asked to talk about their cross-cultural product/brand consumption experience over time. This data provided longitudinal aspects of cross-cultural consumption. In the second preliminary study, 50 objects² were randomly assigned to 55 undergraduate students in a business school in New York City. Each subject was shown 10 objects. These objects

²The 50 objects were sushi, martial art, cola, kimchi, goat cheese, French food, cocktail, balsamic vinegar, bubble bath, dental floss, chopsticks, sashimi, Chinese food, Tamagotchi, brush calligraphy, Korean traditional clothes, fast food stores, milk, cheese fondue, frappuccino/coffee, soymilk, sake, boba milk tea, soy sauce, instant noodle, Chinese herb medicine, Daewoo, Samsung, Morning Glory, Home Depot, BMW, GOYA, Iron Chef, Hello Kitty, SONY, the Great Wall, Shanghai, Buddhism, Italy opera, Chinese opera, Broadway show, Brazil carnival, Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon, American Idle, Jackie Chan, Bob Marley, Martha Stewart, Thanksgiving, Lunar New Year, and Halloween.

originated from various cultural backgrounds. For each object, the subjects answered the open-ended questions: "What do you think about the object?" "Are you willing to adopt the object? Why or why not?" The data provided cross-sectional aspects of cross-cultural consumption.

Content analysis of the two preliminary studies resulted in 10 categories: (1) *product cultural knowledge*: refers to intangible cultural value, knowledge or historical tradition associated with the objects. (2) *Aesthetic standard*: refers to cultural unique concepts of beauty. (3) *Sensory flavor*: refers to specific taste of food. (4) *Practice/technique*: refers to unique cultural practice or technique associated with the objects. (5) *Language*: refers to how learning the foreign language can facilitate product adoption. (6) *Change of existing behavior*: refers to how adopting the objects will lead to change of current habit. (7) *Country image*: refers to the associated country images to the objects. (8) *Self-image*: refers to how the objects reflect the individuals' personality or ideal self-image. (9) *Utility*: refers to how the objects provide functionality. (10) *Quality*: refers to the perceived quality of the objects. 48 items were generated from these two preliminary studies with multiple items in each dimension.

2. Content Validity:

The 48 items were further investigated. Among them, *self-image* and *utility* were two dimensions of *consumer involvement profile (CIP)* (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). They were eliminated since they were involvement constructs. *Quality* and *country image* were also eliminated since they were evaluation constructs. This process resulted in eliminating 19 items. The remaining 29 items were subjected to further analysis. The scale was a 5-point Likert scale.

3. Reliability and Dimensionality:

The 29-item scale was administered to 90 undergraduate students in a business school in New York City. 17 objects³ were randomly assigned to the subjects. Each student was given 2 to 3 objects. Subjects were asked to indicate their home culture.⁴ Those from western countries were given objects from Asia. Those from eastern countries were given objects from the United States or Europe. If a subject had never heard of the object, s/he was not qualified to answer the questionnaire, and was given another object. After eliminating some records with non-response items, there were 118 records.

The initial 29-item scale had a Cronbach coefficient alpha of 0.80. However, several items were only marginally correlated with other items. Also, factor analysis with Varimax rotation was performed on the 29 items. Initially it resulted in a 4-factor structure based on eigenvalue > 1. However, the factor structure was not clear-cut. Some items were loaded on multiple factors, and their factor loading scores were low, which made the interpretation difficult. Therefore, those items that had low item-to-total correlation were removed.

With each item removed, new Cronbach alphas were calculated, and factor analyses with rotation were performed. This process continued until the model had a satisfactory Cronbach

³The 17 objects were green tea, soymilk, chopsticks, cheese, coffee, Hello Kitty, SONY, Buddhism, the Great Wall, Jackie Chan, martial art, Daewoo, Peking opera, sushi, Chinese herb medicine, brush calligraphy, and GAP.

⁴American 25%, Asian 23%, Caribbean 21%, European 19%, Southern American 5%, Other 7%. Female 71%, Male 29%. 80% of them spoke a second language other than English.

TABLE 1
The Foreign Product Competence Dimensions

	Item to Total Correlation	Factor Loading		
		Product Cultural Uniqueness	Language	Change Behavior
1. The object involves some unique technique that is not common in my home culture.	.55	.701		
2. The object gives me an opportunity to experience the foreign culture.	.50	.629		
3. The object involves some unusual practice that is not common in my home culture.	.60	.596		
4. The object involves some value that is not common in my culture.	.46	.557		
5. Consuming the object lets me understand the foreign cultural life-style.	.47	.506		
6. Foreign language plays an important role in learning about the object.	.51		.847	
7. Proficiency in the foreign language will help me understand the object.	.47		.818	
8. Adopting the object requires me to learn the foreign language.	.53		.685	
9. If I adopt the object, I will need to change my current routine.	.55			.800
10. Adopting the object requires me to change my current habit.	.48			.647
11. Adopting the object will change my life-style.	.45			.642
Variance explained by each dimension (proportion)		.69	.26	.15
Cronbach alpha of each dimension (Cronbach alpha of the 11-item scale is .83)		.78	.87	.79

alpha and non-ambiguous factor loading structure. Also, attention was paid to check if the factor structure reflected the construct definition. *Aesthetic standard* and *sensory flavor* items were loaded ambiguously among several factors, and their item-to-total correlations were low. Some of them were single-item factors. This indicated that they were trivial given other items in the model, or they were not the same constructs. These items were eventually eliminated. Also, *practice/technique* fused with *cultural knowledge*. It implied that consumers perceived them as one single dimension. This factor was renamed *product cultural uniqueness*.

The result of the scale purification was an 11-item scale. Further elimination of any items reduced the reliability and blurred the factor structure. The final scale had a Cronbach alpha of 0.88. Item to total correlations ranged from .48 to .77. The three factors accounted for 100% of the variation. The three factors are (1) *product cultural uniqueness*: which includes the perceived culture-specific value, culture-specific technique, and unique cultural life style. The *product cultural uniqueness* dimension includes both declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge associated with the foreign objects. (2) *Language*: which refers to the ability to speak a foreign language required to adopt the foreign products. (3)

Change behavior: which refers to the perceived necessity to change behavior. The three-dimension result supports the hypothesis that the *foreign product competence* has three facets.

4. A Second Sample:

To further test the reliability and validity of the scale, a second sample of 135 subjects from the same business school in New York City were recruited. In this study, the 11-item scale along with the 10-item *personal involvement inventory (PII)* scale (Zaichkowsky, 1994), and the 5-item *consumer ethnocentrism scale (CETSCALE)*⁵ (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) were administered to the second sample. At the same time, *attitude, familiarity, and adoption intention*, were measured on a 5-point scale. Each individual was randomly assigned two foreign objects. There were 9 objects⁶ in total. Each object cell had 27-31 subjects. After eliminating non-qualified or

⁵The original scale had 17 items. To ensure parsimony, only 5 items were selected based on the researcher's judgment.

⁶The 9 objects were green tea, martial art, Chinese herb medicine, chopsticks, brush calligraphy, the Great Wall, coffee, jazz music, and IKEA.

TABLE 2
Correlation Matrix of Foreign Product Competence, Familiarity, PII and ECTSCALE

	Foreign Product Competence			Involvement (PII)		Familiarity	Consumer Ethnocentrism (ECTSCALE)
	Product Cultural Uniqueness	Language	Change Behavior	Affective	Cognitive		
Product Cultural Uniqueness	1.000	0.082	0.157*	0.240***	-0.094	-0.185**	-0.151*
Language		1.000	0.030	-0.004	-0.088	-0.315***	0.070
Change Behavior			1.000	0.008	-0.062	-0.181**	-0.029
PII: Affective				1.000	0.221**	0.059	-0.016
PII: Cognitive					1.000	0.422***	0.059
Familiarity						1.000	-0.054
Consumer Ethnocentrism							1.000

*** significant at .001

** significant at .01

* significant at .05

missing value records, there were 266 observations. The 11-item scale had a Cronbach alpha of .83. It was lower than the first sample. Nonetheless, the factor structure remained the same as before. Table 1 summarizes the results from the second sample.

5. Convergent and Divergent Validity:

Since foreign product competence is assumed to be the antecedent of expertise, it should show convergent validity with expertise. Expertise was measured via one item, “are you familiar with the object?” Although familiarity is not the same as expertise (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987), it is an acceptable proxy of expertise in this scale development study. Also, since the foreign product competence is related to consumers’ cognitive structure, it is expected that it will have convergent validity with involvement. The 10-item PII scale was used to measure involvement. However, the PII scale measures “a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests. (Zaichkowsky, 1985)” Therefore, the correlation between PII and foreign product competence should not be too high.

Further, a third construct, consumer ethnocentrism, was correlated with the existing scale as a comparison. It was measured via the 5-item CETSCALE scale. Consumer ethnocentrism refers to “the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign-made products. (Shimp & Sharma, 1987)” Foreign product competence is much more different from ethnocentrism than from expertise and involvement. Therefore, the correlation with CETSCALE should be lower than that with familiarity or PII.

The 10-item PII scale had a Cronbach alpha of 0.92 and 2-factor structure, affective and cognitive components. The 5-item CETSCALE has a Cronbach alpha of 0.77 and one-factor structure. Table 2 summarizes the correlations. All three dimensions of

foreign product competence are correlated with familiarity. *Product cultural uniqueness* is correlated with the affective component of involvement. Most importantly, the coefficients with CETSCALE are smaller than those with familiarity or the affective involvement. The results support the scale’s construct validity.

6. Nomological Validity:

As defined, foreign product competence includes foreign product specific knowledge, and knowledge related to communication and learning. The more foreign product competence associated with the products, the more effort required to adopting them. Therefore, the three dimensions of foreign product competence should be negatively correlated with familiarity.

H_1 : *Familiarity is negatively correlated with product cultural uniqueness, language, and change behavior.*

Also, since the current scale measures the knowledge required to adopt foreign products, it is related to the cognitive structure. Therefore, the three dimensions should be correlated with involvement.

H_2 : *Involvement is correlated with product cultural uniqueness, language, and change behavior.*

Furthermore, attitude theory posits that consumers form their attitudes based on various product related attributes and the associated values. High familiarity and high involvement lead to accessible attitudes. Therefore, familiarity and involvement should be correlated with attitude. Since *foreign product competence* is the antecedent of involvement, it should not be directly correlated with attitude. Therefore,

TABLE 3
Regression Analyses

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables (Regression Coefficients)									
	Intercept	Foreign Product Competence			Involvement		Familiarity	Attitude	F	R ²
		Product Cultural Uniqueness	Language	Change Behavior	Affective	Cognitive				
Familiarity	3.409 ***	-.177 *	-.358 ***	-.190 **					***	.15
Affective Involvement	-	.253 ***	-	-					***	.06
Cognitive Involvement	-	-	-	-					-	-
Attitude	2.777 ***	-	-	-	.245 ***	.277 ***	.243 ***		***	.42
Adoption Intention	-.173	-	.134*	-.147 **	-.112	.243 ***	.271 ***	.684 ***	***	.54

*** significant at .001 ** significant at .01 * significant at .05

H_{3,1}: Attitude is positively correlated with involvement and familiarity.

H_{3,2}: Attitude is correlated with neither product cultural uniqueness, nor language, nor change behavior.

Finally, familiarity, involvement, and attitude lead to adoption intention. Since *foreign product competence* is the antecedent of familiarity and involvement, it is hypothesized that the three dimensions will not directly correlate with adoption intention. Therefore,

H_{4,1}: Adoption intention is positively correlated with attitude, familiarity and involvement.

H_{4,2}: Adoption intention is correlated with neither product cultural uniqueness, nor language, nor change behavior.

Backward/forward regression analyses were performed to test the nomological framework. Table 3 summarizes the results of the regression analyses. In the *familiarity* model, as predicted, the three dimensions have significant regression coefficients with familiarity. The model is significant and the coefficients are all negative.

In the *involvement* model, only product cultural uniqueness is related to the affective involvement, and none of the three dimensions are correlated with the cognitive involvement. The results suggest that the foreign product knowledge associated with the objects does not evoke cognitive involvement. This finding is consistent with the qualitative data from the two focus groups. The participants frequently talked about how they felt about the foreign objects, but none of them mentioned any cognitive evaluation processes.

Although the above two models are significant, the variances of these two models explained by the three dimensions are low. This is an expected result, since the antecedents of involvement are numerous, and familiarity is the consumers' accumulated experi-

ence and exposure to the object. The current scale does not intend to include all related antecedents of involvement and familiarity. Hence, the low R² values are not crucial in judging nomological validity.

In the *attitude* model, as predicted, involvement and familiarity significantly influence attitude formation. Also, as expected, the three dimensions of foreign product competence do not influence attitude directly.

In the *adoption intention* model, attitude and familiarity, as predicted, correlate with adoption intention. However, only cognitive involvement correlates with adoption intention. Affective involvement does not have direct effect on adoption intention. Also, language and change behavior both directly contribute to adoption intention though of weaker impact. Moreover, the coefficient of change behavior is negative. Change behavior seems to be a blocking factor in cross-cultural adoption.

In sum, the result from the nomological validity analysis suggests that the three dimensions play differential roles in cross-cultural adoption decision. The data provide evidence that the three dimensions of foreign product competence are the antecedents of familiarity and involvement. Familiarity and involvement in turn influence attitude formation. Most interestingly, only product cultural uniqueness influences the affective involvement. None of the three dimensions are related to the cognitive involvement. However, cognitive involvement directly influences adoption intention, but affective involvement does not. These findings are worthy of further investigation.

7. Criterion-Related Validity:

To fulfill criterion-related validity, the scale scores should be sensitive to the differences among objects. Mean factor scores of the 9 objects in the second sample were calculated. The ANOVA tests showed object effect was significant for all three dimensions. Table 4 summarizes the sample sizes, the average factor scores and standard deviations of the 9 objects.

TABLE 4
Mean (Standard Deviation) of Factor Scores by Object

Object	Sample Size	Product Cultural Uniqueness	Language	Change Behavior
Green Tea	30	-0.70 (0.68)	-0.36 (0.73)	-0.40 (0.61)
Martial Art	30	0.37 (0.66)	0.17 (0.93)	0.50 (0.91)
Chinese Herb Medicine	30	-0.08 (0.75)	-0.10 (0.74)	0.29 (0.73)
Chop Sticks	29	0.54 (0.79)	-0.87 (0.43)	0.48 (1.02)
Brush Calligraphy	27	0.22 (0.73)	0.39 (1.04)	0.22 (0.81)
The Great Wall	29	-0.09 (0.72)	0.15 (0.71)	-0.47 (0.77)
Coffee	30	-0.45 (0.84)	-0.09 (0.74)	-0.29 (0.71)
Jazz Music	30	0.50 (0.69)	0.77 (0.83)	-0.10 (0.83)
IKEA	31	-0.25 (0.81)	-0.04 (0.94)	-0.21 (0.63)
F Value		10.04***	9.62***	6.66***

*** significant at .001

Jazz music (0.50), martial art (0.37), and chopsticks (0.54) score high on product cultural uniqueness. These product categories are highly associated with unique cultural meaning and technique. On the other hand, the most globally marketed product categories, e.g. coffee (-0.45) and green tea (-0.70), score low on product cultural uniqueness.

Learning foreign language is important in Jazz music (0.77) and brush calligraphy (0.39). However, some product, e.g. chopsticks (-0.87), does not require proficiency in foreign language. Even a product as complicate as Chinese herb medicine (-0.10) does not require foreign language competence. This finding is consistent with the qualitative data from the focus group discussions. Some subjects mentioned that because translations of product usage instructions were readily available, they did not need to learn the foreign language to adopt the products. Although language has been reported as the most important factor in acculturation (LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton, 1993), in cross-cultural consumption, language may have weaker impact on product adoption.

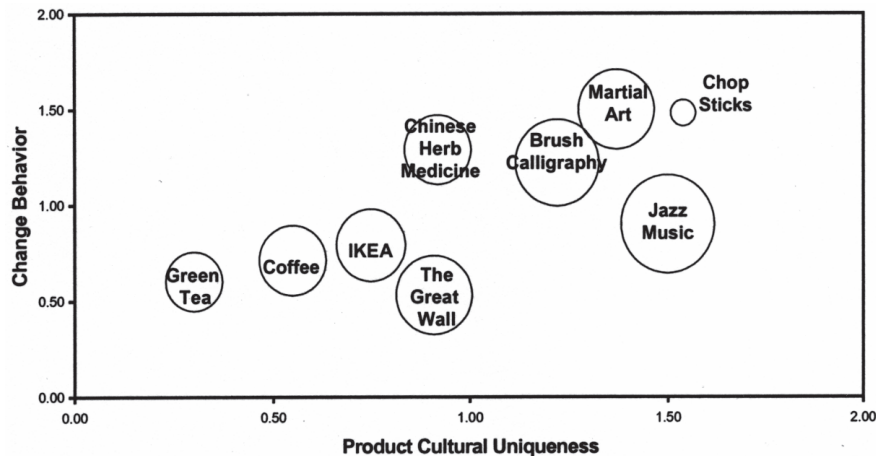
Martial art (0.50) and chopsticks (0.48) score high on change behavior dimension since they require consumers to change their current regime of exercise or the way to handle food. On the other hand, visiting the Great Wall (-0.47) is just a temporary exposure to Chinese culture. It requires no change of behavior. Also, green tea (-0.40), and coffee (-0.29) score low on change behavior. Since consumers have probably already adopted these products, they do not have to change any existing behavior.

CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

This study defines *foreign product competence* to classify products in an era of globalization. *Foreign product competence* has three dimensions: (1) *product cultural uniqueness*, (2) *language*, and (3) *change behavior*. Firstly, the three dimensions have important implications in cross-cultural marketing communications. Only *product cultural uniqueness* is linked to affective involvement. Surprisingly, none of the dimensions of *foreign product competence* directly influence cognitive involvement. It suggests that affective advertising may be more effective than informative advertising in cross-cultural consumption communication. Also, *language* and *change behavior* directly influence adoption intention. These two dimensions are not directly related to product knowledge, but they facilitate learning. It suggests that simply conveying foreign product-related information to consumers may not be sufficient. Marketers need to help consumers to learn the foreign products. Moreover, *change behavior* has negative effect on adoption intention. Hence, in global marketing, steps should be taken to reduce the adoption barriers. Strategic focus should be on minimizing the perceived difficulty to change behavior, or on identifying creative usage that can integrate the foreign objects into consumers' current consumption.

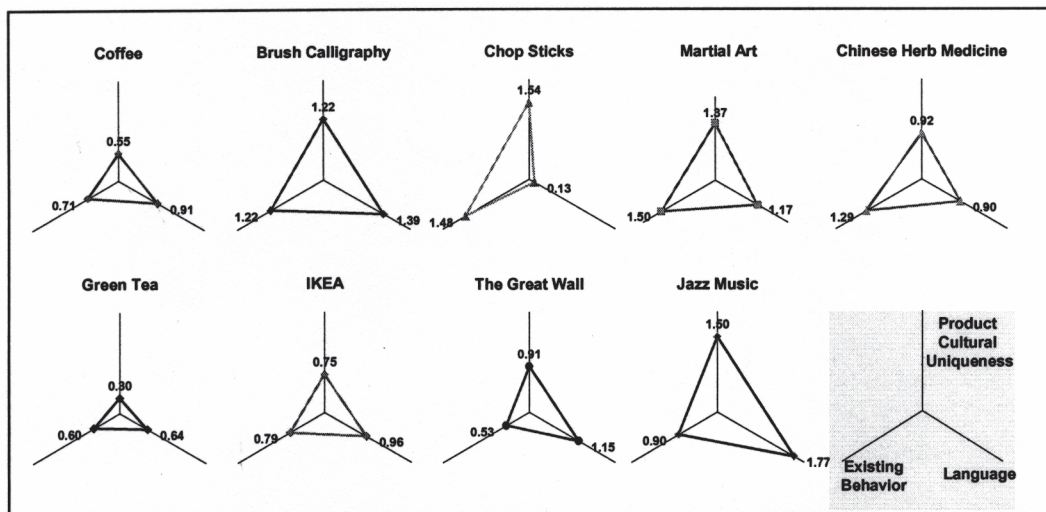
Secondly, the current scale provides a measure of the objects' degree of globalization. Figure 1 plots 9 objects against *product cultural uniqueness* and *change behavior*. The size of the bubble

FIGURE 1
Object Degree of Globalization



* Original factor scores are rescaled to [0, 2].

FIGURE 2
Foreign Product Competence Triangles



* Original factor scores are rescaled to [0, 2].

represents the *language* dimension. The objects on the lower-left corner indicate a higher degree of globalization. Consumers perceive the objects as low in product cultural uniqueness and they do not perceive any need to change their behavior to adopt the objects. They perceive the objects as “non-foreign.” On the other hand, the objects on the upper-right corner are perceived as “foreign.” These objects are perceived to have unique cultural knowledge and require change of existing behavior.

Thirdly, figure 2 depicts the objects’ *foreign product competence* dimensions in triangles. These *foreign product competence triangles* provide a visualization of the intrinsic product characters that may influence each object’s diffusion pattern. The objects demonstrating larger triangular areas are those perceived to require higher *foreign product competence* to adopt. These objects demand

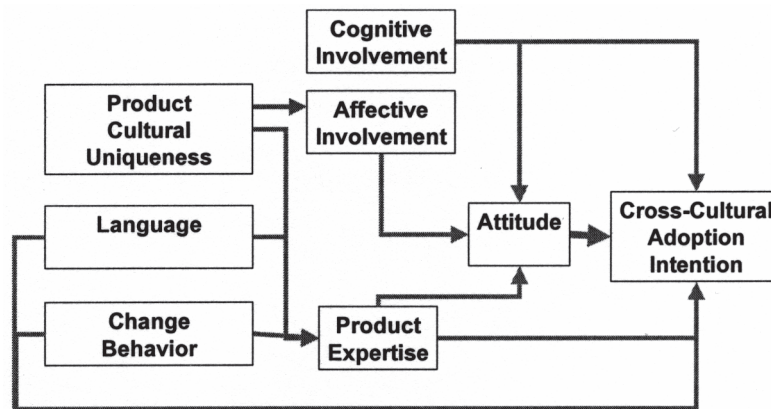
more cultural unique knowledge, changing existing behavior and learning a foreign language. Therefore, these objects may have limited global acceptance. Martial art, brush calligraphy, and jazz music belong to this type of product. Most likely, the diffusion pattern of this type of products remains a cultural mosaic.

On the other hand, products demonstrating smaller triangular areas demand less *foreign product competence* to adopt, for example, coffee and green tea; these enjoy greater acceptance in the global market place. Most likely, these objects have become part of the converged global consumption culture.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The relationship between knowledge and involvement is less studied. This study finds that product specific knowledge, lan-

FIGURE 3
Causal Relationship among Foreign Product Competence, Product Expertise, Involvement, Attitude and Cross-Cultural Adoption Intention



guage, and ability to change are three types of knowledge that are perceived as relevant in cross-cultural product adoption. This study also provides a plausible relationship among *foreign product competence*, involvement, product expertise, attitude, and adoption intention (Figure 3). Attention should be addressed to the differential roles the three dimensions of *foreign product competence* play in cross-cultural adoption. All three dimensions of *foreign product competence* are the antecedents of expertise. In turn, expertise influences attitude and adoption intention. However, only product cultural uniqueness contributes to the affective involvement. None of the three dimensions of foreign product competence are related to the cognitive involvement. In turn, cognitive involvement directly influences adoption intention, but affective involvement influence adoption intention indirectly through attitude.

On the other hand, the knowledge that is required to bridge the foreign product knowledge with the consumers' prior knowledge, i.e. both language and change behavior, directly influence adoption intention. Future research may investigate in more detail this causal relationship via structural equation modeling.

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Consuming in Hell: The Burning of Papier Mache Replicas of Consumer Products in the Chinese Culture

Francis Piron, University of Guam

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Within the Chinese culture, paper has been burnt for millennia to accompany the departed on their journey to the netherworld and as a medium to carry relief for those already there. Eventually, and more so now, paper has been used to construct replicas of contemporary consumer products that are burnt for enjoyment and comfort in hell! This research traces the history of the ritual, offers, as an example, an inventory of in-store, available reproduced products, and reports on a series of in-depth interviews of consumers. Interviewees identify the products they wish to consume in the after-life and elaborate on their selection and reasons.

Introduction

In most cultures, families send along significant items and memorabilia with their departed, such as pictures, food items, favorite toys or objects, or religious ornaments. Thus, it is not surprising that money has been found in burial sites over the world. While the ritual may have subsided as cultures modernized, the practice of burning paper replicas of money and consumer goods has remained strong wherever the Chinese have settled. In the People's Republic of China, such traditional beliefs and customs were strongly discouraged and often punished, and children were instructed to view such rituals as feudal superstitions to be done away with. However, the practice of burning paper and paper products survived, but almost exclusively in Guangdong and Guanxi provinces. For instance, as a part of this research, the author investigated the phenomenon in Beijing and Shanghai, and could only find a handful of stores carrying a very limited range of products in the specialized street of each city. In comparison, overseas Chinese did not experience such political and cultural pressures and, as a result, the offering of money and paper products to the deceased has flourished, uninterrupted, into an extremely rich experience. For that reason, this research was conducted in Singapore and Malaysia where Chinese traditions have remained solid.

To better investigate the depth of the behavior, four investigative approaches were used: in-store observation, structured interviews with store managers and with religious experts, and in-depth interviews with consumers. During in-store observations, permission was requested to take photographs. Stores and their managers were interviewed in Singapore and in two Malaysian cities (Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh). One locally renowned Taoist priest and one respected Buddhist monk were interviewed and 14 consumers participated in in-depth interviews in their home.

Adeology: Advertising as A Battlefield of Ideologies in Transitional China

Xin Zhao, University of Utah

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

China has witnessed dramatic social and ideological changes since the turn of last century. As early as the 1880s when China was forced to open its market to the world, advertising began to play important roles in preparing consumers for an emerging consumer society. Till the 1920s, people in some urban areas such as Shanghai had enjoyed a prosperous consumer culture with an established advertising infrastructure and many global brands competing with each other. Happiness was represented in advertising as not from studying Confucian works as it used to be taught before but from possessing consumer goods. Merchants were removed from the lowest social strata and touted by many. China was moving from a Confucian society to a Consumer society. However, when CCP (Chinese Communist Party) took over China, advertising and consumerism were again severely criticized under communist ideology and replaced by political propaganda from public space until the economic reformation in the late 1970s. With more than twenty years of market socialization, advertising in China has entered its second "Golden Age", and ad expenditures have reached \$11 billion in 2001. Consumerism again is promoted as an important incentive to economy. China has become one of the most promising consumer societies in today's world. Though advertising has long been acknowledged as an important factor in shaping social and ideological changes, such inquiries have seldom been conducted in a Chinese context. What was the role of advertising in this dramatic ideological transition and how the ideology of consumption was established through advertising in China still remain unclear in our literature. This paper attempts to address these questions by drawing upon theories of semiotic, discursive analysis and representation.

Current literature on Chinese advertising mostly concentrates on cultural values reflected in advertisements and compares them with those of other countries such as US. The results showed that while there was an apparent shift towards Western values, some traditional values still remained strong. Unsatisfied with the simple count of content analysis, some researchers conducted in-depth interviews with some viewers of ads, and found that Chinese consumers had different interpretations of the global images in advertising. However, advertising's influences on social and ideological changes in transitional China have been generally ignored. Literary theory has been introduced in advertising research on Western societies and proved especially rewarding in deciphering the historically and ideological constructed meanings in advertising. Advertising has been found to be a rich source of the ideology of consumption and works by means of signification, discourse production, and representation.

Theories of semiotics, discursive analysis and representation provide the theoretical and methodological basis of this paper. Images are proposed by some as not only denoted but also connoted. When used in advertising, the denoted images are usually deprived of their original meanings and put to naturalize the cultural values associated with them. Such naturalization also has ideological effects, which serves to fix the values imposed and to maintain the status quo. As part of the commercial discourses, advertising also produces knowledge about consumption, constructs the subjectivity of consumer, and provides an easy way for consumers to become updated—purchasing the promoted products. The differences between "being modern" as a consumer and "being obsolete" as a non-

consumer are also constructed in Chinese advertising through stereotyping and other representation practices.

In transitional China where the new ideology strives to replace the old, advertising provided a public arena for the transition to happen. In the case of 1920s Shanghai, it was the substitution of consumerism for Confucius; in the case of contemporary China, it is the ideology of consumption replacing communism. In both cases, the authority of the old ideology is transferred to the new, and the sacredness of the old is secularized through the commercial use in advertising. The new ideology replaces the sacred public space that used to be occupied by the old. As a visual discourse and materialized ideology, advertising in transitional China also produces the subjectivity of consumers. However, the discussion on the ideological aspects of advertising never claims that advertising alone can lead to the dramatic social changes. There are also other forces at the same time that form the discourses. Nevertheless, the ubiquity and immediacy of advertising make it among the most influential and powerful ones. The dialectic characteristics of social discourses and advertising also invoke complex reactions to advertisements in audience. Advertising needs to be re-considered as a public arena for ideological transitions and advertisers should also take into account the complexities of existing and competing ideologies besides cultural values when planning ad campaign in transitional China. This paper also contributes to the field by applying literary theories to Chinese advertising research. Limitations and future research are discussed as well.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Effects of Preference Elicitation Task on Consumer Reactions to Product Customization

Ana Valenzuela, San Francisco State University
Ravi Dhar, Yale University

SESSION OVERVIEW

Customization of products and services is key to enhancing customer value and a source of competitive advantage. In a classical sense, this requires capturing consumer preferences and offering product assortments that include the consumers most preferred alternatives. From a constructionist perspective, consumer preferences are not well defined and, therefore, inferred from their constructed responses when consumers are required to make a choice or judgment (e.g. Bettman, Luce and Payne, 1998). These constructed preferences are volatile and preference reversals may occur since preference elicitation is sensitive to contextual factors (e.g. Park, Jun and Macinnis, 2000; Simonson and Tversky, 1992; Nowlis and Simonson, 1997; Hsee and Leclerc, 1998).

Different preference elicitation tasks might highlight different attributes and tradeoffs leading to inconsistent evaluations. In that case, different methods of preference evaluation may result in a different object being viewed as most preferred, or may lead to different levels of satisfaction with the chosen option. Additionally, different preference elicitation tasks may facilitate learning and influence expectations about the quality and control over the choice decision. For example, Huffman and Kahn (1998) showed that the presentation of product information attribute-by-attribute facilitated preference learning, reduced perceived process complexity and increased consumers' readiness to make a choice. That relative ease of learning preferences also increased satisfaction with the sale interaction.

Although the recent literature has begun to explore how product customization may lead to different choice outcomes, it is still unclear how different customization processes may affect final product choice and the evaluation of both the customized product and the customization process. The three papers in this session are a step forward in that direction. All three papers not only explore how product customization may lead to inconsistent consumer evaluations and choices but also identify important moderating factors. They deal with research questions ranging from the effects of preference elicitation task transparency and amount of control afforded by customization, to distortions of customization outcomes depending on customization procedures. The three papers are complementary and share a common focus in examining the impact of product customization on consumer preference matching and on the overall purchase experience.

In the first paper, Kramer examines a condition that moderates consumers' ability to deduce their preferences from their measurement responses and recognize that the customized offer fits their preferences more closely than alternative product options. He proposes that such moderator is the transparency of the preference elicitation task, defined as the ease with which consumers can "see through" the measurement to infer their preferences from their measured responses.

In the second paper, Godek, Brown and Yates show that there are other aspects of product customization that plausibly lead to advantages above and beyond mere preference matching. For example, perceptions of control afforded by customization should lead to higher evaluations of both the process and the product selected. Customization also allows decomposition of the decision problem into a series of smaller sub-problems affecting consumers' evaluations of a product selection process.

In the third paper, Dhar, Valenzuela and Zettelmeyer examine how different preference measurement tasks distort customization outcomes as well as the satisfaction with the customization process. They find that customization procedures based on attribute-by-attribute choice instead of choice between fully specified alternatives affects product choice, satisfaction with the choice, confusion with the process and readiness to buy.

As a whole, these three papers highlight the notion that product customization influences consumer choices and evaluations in systematic ways but not equally for everyone. With a well-developed framework and extensive data, all three papers account for how customization processes affect decision-making. Professor Pat West provided the impetus for the discussion by not only summarizing the work but also highlighting areas of future research. She noted that all three papers seemed to conclude that decomposing the choice process for the consumer augmented satisfaction with the outcome and probability of purchase. She called for more research on the impact of choice decomposition on consumer behavior.

INDIVIDUAL PAPER ABSTRACTS

"The Effect of Preference Measurement Transparency on Consumer Responses to Customized Offers"

Thomas Kramer, Baruch College/CUNY

In the age of customization, marketing activities frequently involve measuring the preferences of consumers and tailoring product offerings or recommendations to such individual specifications (Simonson 2003). Common underlying assumptions of these individual marketing approaches are that consumers can express their preferences in a preference elicitation task and recognize the superior value of an offer that is customized to their responses to the measurement task.

However, research on the constructive nature of preferences suggests that consumers may not always have stable, well-defined preferences that marketers can elicit (e.g., Bettman, Luce, and Payne 1998). One implication of such preference instability and uncertainty is that consumers may need to construct the values they express in the measurement task. A second implication is that consumers may need to infer their preferences from their constructed responses to the measurement task to evaluate whether the customized offer matches their tastes better than alternative product options. Thus, consumers who do not identify their measured responses correctly are less likely to recognize the superior value of a customized offer tailored to their individual specifications.

Therefore, it is important to examine the conditions that moderate consumers' ability to deduce their preferences from their measurement responses and recognize that the customized offer fits their preferences more closely than alternative product options. In this research, I propose that one such moderator is the transparency of the preference elicitation task, defined as the ease with which consumers can "see through" the measurement to infer their preferences from their measurement responses.

Results of two experiments show that consumers' responses to customized offers correspond more closely to their expressed preferences when they are obtained using a more transparent measurement technique, such as the self-explicated approach, as

opposed to full-profile conjoint analysis. Subjects who expressed their preferences for digital cameras (study 1) or personal digital assistants (study 2) using the self-explicated approach were more likely to accept a personalized product recommendation that matched their measured preferences most closely and was ranked highest on a list of recommended options. However, consumers' understanding of their measured preferences may become less accessible over time (e.g., Fazio, Powell, and Williams 1989), and task transparency may therefore moderate responses only when the evaluation of the customized offer follows preference measurement without delay. In support of this hypothesis, both experiments find that the difference in response due to task transparency is no longer obtained when offer evaluation follows preference measurement after a longer delay of one week.

A third study suggests that, with less transparent preference measurements (e.g., full-profile conjoint analysis), reminding people of their expressed preferences can lead to less favorable responses to a customized offer derived from these preferences. Following less transparent measurement, subjects who were provided with a personalized product recommendation after a delay responded to it less favorably when reminded of their measured responses to the earlier elicitation task. Such a reminder had no effect on subjects in the transparent measurement task condition.

“Customization Decisions: The Effects of Perceived Control and Decomposition on Evaluations”

John Godek, University of Oregon

Christina L. Brown, University of Michigan

J. Frank Yates, University of Michigan

Technological advances have led to increased collaboration between consumers and firms in the product selection process to the point where consumers are often able to specify some or all of the attributes to be included in the products being purchased. Such customization is seen as a desirable, and perhaps even a necessary, strategy by firms in order to be competitive in the marketplace. This belief is based primarily on the notion that allowing consumers to specify product features should lead to closer matches between consumers' preferences and selected products. However, in addition to this benefit, there are other aspects of customization that may plausibly lead to advantages above and beyond preference matching. Two features in particular, attribute specification and product selection task decomposition, provide additional mechanisms through which customization can influence consumers' decision process. The present research identifies several conditions under which customization yields benefits above and beyond preference matching, and tests when and for whom these conditions apply.

The first aspect of customization examined in this research concerns the consumer's ability to specify some or all of the attributes to be included in the product purchased. This attribute specification increases the consumer's perceptions of control over the process and the product selected by affording the consumer greater input into what is eventually chosen (Averill 1973). Prior research concerning control (Langer 1975; Thompson 1981; White 1959) suggests that people value control, and that increases in perceived control positively influence both how they feel about the current situation as well as their thoughts about the outcome. There are conditions, however, where consumers may wish to relinquish control to someone else in order to facilitate a better decision (Hollander and Rassuli 1999). This past research suggests that the perceptions of control afforded by customization should lead to higher evaluations of both the process and the product selected. These effects should interact with the degree to which consumers desire to retain or relinquish control in order to facilitate a better decision outcome. In order to test these predictions, an experimen-

tal study was conducted where perceived control and desired control were manipulated. The results of this study indicated that, in a purchase situation where there is a match between perceived and desired levels of control, such that they are both high or low, process and product evaluations are higher. Mediation analyses per Baron and Kenny (1986) showed that process evaluations fully mediated the effect of this interaction on product evaluations. These results provide strong evidence concerning how changes in perceived control afforded by customization can increase or even decrease consumers' evaluations of the process and product selected.

The second aspect of customization examined in this research concerns how customization breaks down or decomposes the decision problem into a series of smaller sub-problems. Such decomposition has been shown to improve decision making relative to holistic evaluations of entire alternatives by allowing decision makers to more easily consider a larger number of alternatives and factors (Fischer 1977; Morera and Budescu 1998), while simultaneously reducing judgment errors by relaxing the information processing demands on the decision maker (Kleinmuntz 1990). Easing the cognitive burden on decision makers should reduce feelings of frustration while also positively influence expectations about the quality of the resulting decision. Decomposing the decision task too much, though, can make it too simple and lead to distraction or counter-arguing against the wisdom of the consumer's choice, and thus lower evaluations (Anand and Sternthal 1989; Wright 1973). Accordingly, this suggests an inverted U-shaped relationship between decomposition and evaluation. Since more difficult problems require additional cognitive resources to complete, this curve should shift in the direction of more decomposition as problem difficulty increases. The results of a second study support the prediction of an inverted U-shaped relationship between level of decomposition and process evaluation, and that this curve will shift in the direction of higher decomposition when problem difficulty increases. The relationship between level of decomposition and product evaluation shows a similar pattern, but is less definitive. These results suggest that too little or too much customization can lower consumers' evaluations of a product selection process, and that such effect depends upon the level of difficulty associated with the decision problem.

In a third study, we examine the moderating effects of outcome ambiguity in order to determine when and for whom customization will influence both process and product evaluations. We hypothesized that since people tend to be ambiguity averse (Ellsberg 1961), they will tend to search the decision context more for information when outcome ambiguity is high. Under such circumstances, information about the process should be accessible and seem diagnostic (Feldman and Lynch 1988), making it more likely to be used for generating product evaluations. Such a mechanism received support from the third study where high-experience SUV-users and low-experience SUV-users were queried about a new automobile hybrid designed to address many of common complaints by SUV-users. As expected, there was a large main effect such that all participants evaluated the choice process higher when there was customization instead of choosing from an assortment. Of note though was that for low-experience SUV-users, product selection mode (assortment or customization) had the same effect on product and process evaluations, while for high-experience SUV-users there was no such difference on product evaluations between the product selection conditions. Together, these results suggest that higher ambiguity concerning the outcome does indeed make it more likely for process evaluations to influence product evaluations.

“The Effects of Customization Procedures on Consumer Preferences and Satisfaction”

Ravi Dhar, Yale University

Ana Valenzuela, San Francisco State University

Florian Zettelmeyer, UC Berkeley

The rapid proliferation of options in many product-markets and the potential for information overload has created an important role for customization. A basic precursor to any customization requires preference elicitation. A major finding in the behavioral decision theory literature is that consumer preferences are not well defined and different preference elicitation tasks might highlight different attributes and tradeoffs leading to differing product evaluations and choices. We propose that different preference elicitation methods (i.e. customization interfaces) affect not only a consumer's final product choice, but also his/her reaction to that choice. We propose that different tasks for arriving at customer preferences will systematically distort final outcomes as well as the satisfaction with the customization process. Specifically, different methods of preference elicitation may result in (i) a different final product being perceived as most preferred, (ii) different degree of choice difficulty and satisfaction and (iii) different percentage of no choice.

We examine these propositions in a series of studies using two common means of measuring consumer preferences in the conjoint literature (e.g., Srinivasan and Park 1997) that are widely used in the business world. Specifically, preference measurement is based on information presented about fully specified products (“full-profile” approach) or by rating in isolation the desirability of the different levels for each attribute for all attributes (similar to “self-explicated” approach). In contrast to the focus on modeling partworths, our emphasis is the effect of these approaches on impacting the most preferred alternative. We propose that the customization procedure based on eliciting customer desirability level for each attribute should increase the preference for intermediate options as opposed to more extreme options. Specifically, when each attribute is presented in isolation, the consumer uncertainty about absolute attribute levels should increase choice of compromise options to reduce the probability of making a sub-optimal choice by selecting intermediate levels for most attributes (Simonson 1989). In contrast, when respondents are confronted with multiple alternatives in a fully specified customization format, they are likely to experience greater conflict (Dhar 1997; Iyengar and Lepper 2000). Respondents that want to avoid making choice conflict often resort to lexicographic decision rules (Dhar 1996, 1997) where alternatives are preferred that have the highest value on the most important attributes.

Different customization procedures should also affect experienced states during and after customization. As noted by Huffman and Kahn, learning within-attribute preferences from alternatives is difficult. The reason is that such learning requires consumers to decompose the alternative into its attributes and infer how each contributes to the overall evaluative reaction. On the other hand, presentation of information by attribute is easier to process because information is presented in smaller pieces (e.g. Chase and Simon 1973). Since consumer learning is easier when product information is presented by attribute, we expect consumers to feel less confusion in this type of customization process. The relative ease of learning preferences may also increase satisfaction with the sale outcome.

Finally, we propose that customization procedure will have an effect on the consumer readiness to make a choice. A psychological variable that has received much attention is the degree of difficulty in deciding among the options provided (Dhar 1997; Tversky and Shafir 1992; Luce 1998). These studies show that when consumers confront several attractive options such that none easily stands out as the best, they often tend to put off choice. If product alternatives

are presented simultaneously, the decision process typically involves making tradeoffs between relatively equally attractive alternatives. This process is likely to increase the difficulty of choosing any one alternative. As a consequence, we expect to find larger choice deferral when consumers customize products choosing from fully-specified alternatives.

Studies 1 and 2 show that consumers tend to choose an intermediate (compromise option) significantly more often when they customize a product attribute-by-attribute. The increase in compromised choices in attribute-by-attribute customization tasks seems to be robust across product categories and is not affected by the consumer's familiarity level with the product category. On the other hand, familiarity level with the product category does moderate choice tradeoffs when consumers customize choosing between fully specified alternatives. Subjects choose lower price-lower quality options on average when their familiarity with the category is low, but choose higher price-higher quality choices when their familiarity is high. Additionally, Study 2's findings support that consumers experience less confusion with the choice process in an attribute-by-attribute customization task. Lower confusion with the choice process (in other words less uncertainty about having made the right choice) results in more satisfaction with the final choice. At the same time, when consumers confront several attractive product alternatives, such that none easily stands out as the best, they often tend to put off choice. Consistent with this argument, by-fully-specified-alternative customization results in a larger percentage of product no-choice.

Finally, Studies 3 finds a boundary condition to Study 1 and 2's findings. We argue in study 1 and 2 that, when product alternatives are presented simultaneously, the decision process typically involves explicit inter-attribute comparisons. The process of making tradeoffs between relatively equally attractive alternatives is likely to increase the difficulty of choosing any one alternative (e.g., Luce, Bettman and Payne 2001). Making tradeoffs makes counterfactuals become more salient. Counterfactual thinking drives consumers to the realization that they are giving up on certain attribute levels when they are making a choice. As a consequence, consumers confronted with explicit trade-offs in a customization task are likely to experience greater choice conflict (Dhar 1997; Iyengar and Lepper 2000). Study 3 reverses Study 1 and 2's results by constructing an attribute-by-attribute condition in which trade-offs in the choice between attributes are explicit (choosing between features within a fixed-priced product). In that condition, attribute-by-attribute customization leads to lower satisfaction and a lower probability to purchase.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The Economics and Psychology of Consumer Search: Process-Level Perspectives

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Most research on consumer search to date has taken as a starting point a normative model of optimal search. Typically, the work has then gone on to show that consumers do not fully adhere to the decision rules prescribed by such models. Relatively little work to date has used alternative approaches to examining consumer search that are closer to the actual search behavior of consumers in real-world settings, e.g., by starting from a more descriptive analysis.

The objective of this session was to bring together recent work on consumer search that takes initial steps in this direction. The session combined three papers that, from different perspectives, examine specific facets of consumer search processes. All three use detailed, process-level data to investigate consumer search using data-rich experiments and survey research. The papers in this session operate at the nexus of economic and psychological analysis, to capture both the normative and behavioral dimensions of consumer search. Thus, by bringing together and discussing three detailed process-level studies that address different facets of consumer search, this session was aimed at stimulating discussion on the theory of consumer search processes and how they can best be investigated.

The first paper (by Ratchford, Lee, and Talukdar) focuses on consumer search for product information. It uses detailed data on types of Internet sources used by automobile buyers from a survey of consumers who recently bought automobiles. The authors study the determinants of the choice of using different types of Internet sources, and substitution patterns between those types and other, non-Internet sources. To do so, they develop and test a general model of the choice of information sources in consumer searches for product information.

The second paper (by Hutchinson and Meyer) experimentally examines the consumer search process for information or products in the context of a finite-sample search problem. The authors address the effect of learning on two psychological phenomena that have been shown to lead to under-searching: risk aversion and underestimation of the future benefits of search. The results suggest that risk aversion is a stable part of search decisions, but that underestimation of maxima is transient and tends to vanish as consumers learn through task experience.

The third paper (by Häubl and Dellaert) conceptualizes the process of consumer search for multi-attribute products as a series of micro decisions and introduces a behavioral theory of consumer product search that augments normative search theory with three extensions: (1) the effects of the complexity of consumers' micro decisions at each search stage, (2) consumers' reliance on perceptual cues to simplify their micro decisions, and (3) searchers' tendency to optimize locally. The authors report the results of an internet-based shopping experiment, which provide support for the predictions implied by this behavioral theory of search.

This discussion was led by Eric Johnson, and explored patterns of effects with respect to behavioral aspects of consumer search. Some promising avenues for further research in this area were also discussed. Thus, the session generated promising starting points for furthering a process-level theory of consumer search.

"Consumer Use of the Internet in Search for Automobiles"

Brian T. Ratchford, University of Maryland

Myung-Soo Lee, Baruch College

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One can think of the expenditure of time with different information sources as inputs to a process of producing better buys. Using a model based on this approach, we studied consumer use of the Internet as a source of information for purchasing automobiles (2003). One of our findings was that time with the Internet appears to draw time from other sources in equal proportion to their use. However our measure of Internet use was an aggregate across all types of Internet use.

We have since collected more detailed data on types of Internet sources used from a survey of consumers who bought automobiles in Summer 2001. Using these data we extend our earlier study to make more detailed inferences about the determinants of choice of types of Internet sources, and about substitution between those types and other non-Internet sources.

For this purpose we develop and test a more general model of the choice of information than the one used in our earlier study, which had the restrictive IIA property. Our model assumes that consumers add new information to a stock of prior information to produce better choices, defined as moving closer to an optimal choice as compared to a random choice. The new information is produced by allocating time to specific Internet and traditional information sources. The function used to translate time into new information is a modified version of the Cobb-Douglas function, which allows for flexible substitution patterns between information sources. Using this model, we are able to derive expressions for the share of time devoted to each source as a function of the use of other sources and consumer characteristics. We are also able to derive an expression for total search effort.

Employing this framework, we estimate the determinants of shares of use of alternative Internet and non-Internet sources, and we also estimate the determinants of total search effort across all sources. We employ our survey data for this purpose. The data set, which was collected to be compatible with earlier surveys done by us in 1990 and 2000, was obtained by a mail survey done in early 2002 on a sample of new car buyers in the Buffalo, N.Y., MSA who bought in July and August 2001. Our data contain 767 usable responses from a sample of 3000. Though the response rate is slightly lower than in our earlier surveys, it is still above 25 percent, which is reasonable for a mail survey. Our survey asked questions about time spent on 11 categories of search, which can be classified into the categories: friend/relative, 3rd party magazine/book sources such as *Consumer Reports*, manufacturer/dealer sources, and Internet. In addition we collected data on proportion of Internet time spent with the following Internet sources: manufacturer web sites, dealer web sites, auto buying services (e.g., autobytel), 3rd party information services on line, bulletin board/chat online (e.g., Yahoo!Auto).

Our results indicate that approximately 54 percent of the 2001 car buyers in our sample used the Internet, compared to approximately 39 percent in our 1999 sample. Higher uncertainty about dealers, lower satisfaction with previous dealer, lower experience in terms of past car purchases and living in the area, being in the market for higher end cars, lower age, higher education and higher

income are associated with an increased share of search time with the Internet. Compared to 1999, however, we find that people with higher age, lower income and females were more likely to use the Internet in 2001 than in 1999. This is evidence that Internet usage is diffusing across socio-economic groups.

We have examined substitution patterns between the Internet and other sources, and between specific types of Internet sources and other sources. Consistent with our 1999 data, our results indicate that an increased share of time with the Internet is associated with a decreased share of time with dealer/manufacturer non-Internet sources. These sources appear to be substitutes. However, contrary to our 1999 study, our preliminary results indicate that an increased share of time with the Internet is associated with an increased share of time with Friends/relatives, suggesting that these sources are complements.

We have examined relationships between the use of specific types of web sites, and the use of non-Internet sources, something that we could not do in our earlier study. One of our results is that share of use of off-line 3rd party sources is positively related to the share on-line 3rd party sources. This suggests that these sources are complementary, with heavy users of these sources accessing them from both media. Another result is that time spent on-line with manufacturer web sites is negatively related to the share of use of manufacturer/dealer sources. This is consistent with buyers using the web to gather information on what car to buy rather than using the dealer as a source of this information. This allows them to come to the dealer better informed about what they will buy, and to cut down on time with the dealer.

An issue to be investigated with our data by the time of the conference is the relationship between use of different Internet sources and total search effort. While the Internet should lead to increased efficiency at search (presumably consumers would not use it otherwise), it could lead to increased total search if it increases the potential gains to search as well. We would like to know under what circumstances the Internet increases or decreases search, and will investigate this with our data.

“Are Consumers Really Suboptimal Searchers? The Effect of Learning and Task Format on the Optimality of Stopping Decisions in Sequential Search Tasks”

J. Wesley Hutchinson, University of Pennsylvania

Robert J. Meyer, University of Pennsylvania

Dating back to the work of Stigler (1961), optimal search models have been used as a starting point in attempts to study the process that consumers use to decide how much information to gather prior to making a market choice. A common finding in this work is that consumers often systematically depart from the predictions of such models, such as by being sensitive to normatively-irrelevant localized features of a sequential data series (e.g., large contrast in data values between adjacent time periods), and a global tendency to search less than would be prescribed by a risk-neutral normative model. Exactly why we observe these departures from optimality and how robust they are, however, is far from resolved. Unknown, for example, is whether observed tendencies to under search primarily accrue to risk aversion versus underestimating the future benefits of search—two different psychological accounts that predict the same bias. Likewise, also unclear is whether departures from optimality are momentary consequences of task unfamiliarity, and would vanish among consumers who have had extensive experience in conducting searches.

In this paper we examine these issues by reporting the results of two experiments that examine the ability of individuals to learn to solve a finite-sample search problem designed as a casino game.

The game involves a player and a house dealer, where the dealer first takes a single draw from an urn that contains 100 balls numbered from 1 to 100, and reveals the outcome to the player. The player is then given the opportunity to purchase a fixed number of additional draws from the urn at a cost of c per draw, with the goal of drawing at least one ball whose value is greater than that of the dealer. The game is equivalent to the class of a priori search problems first considered by Stigler (1961) and more recently explored in Marketing by Feinberg and Huber (1996). To test whether departures from optimality in this task accrue to risk aversion versus mis-estimation of the benefits of search (the expected value of the maximum draw from a certain sample size), we study behavior in a second game that directly requires players to guess the maximum value from N -draws from a uniform distribution.

Analyses of the data reveal two important findings. First, replicating previous work in experimental tests of optimal search models, subjects systematically purchased fewer observations than would be predicted under optimal search theory, however this bias diminished in size—but without completely vanishing—after several rounds of play. Second, respondents displayed a strong systematic tendency to underestimate the maximum value from N draws of a uniform given limited task experience, seemingly supporting a calculation-error explanation for under-searching. In contrast, this bias completely vanished with task experience. The data thus suggest that under-searching is a consequence of a coupling of both forces, with risk aversion being a stable part of search decisions and underestimation of maxima a transient one that vanishes with task experience.

“A Behavioral Theory of Consumer Product Search”

Gerald Häubl, University of Alberta

Benedict G.C. Dellaert, Maastricht University

A well-articulated normative theory of consumer product search, based primarily on the notions of search cost and (expected) returns to search, has been developed in the literature (see, e.g., Ratchford and Srinivasan 1993; Weitzman 1979). However, while this theory makes very specific predictions about the manner in which consumers ought to search for new products, relatively little is known about how consumers actually go about this type of search.

We conceptualize the process of sequential search for multi-attribute products with recall as a series of “micro” decisions. At each stage of the search process (i.e., for each inspected alternative), the consumer, either explicitly or implicitly, makes two related micro decisions: (1) whether the current product is the most attractive one encountered thus far and (2) whether to terminate the search and buy the best of the inspected alternatives or continue searching.

This paper introduces a behavioral theory of consumer product search, which is based on the normative theory, but augments the latter with three broad non-normative extensions. The three extensions are (1) the effects of the complexity of consumers’ micro decisions at each search stage, (2) consumers’ reliance on perceptual cues to simplify their micro decisions, and (3) searchers’ tendency to optimize locally, i.e., to overrely on recently encountered product information. We propose that the first of these extensions will contribute to our understanding of when consumers stop searching, and the latter two will help explain the perceived attractiveness of an inspected product relative to the most attractive one up to that point.

Effects of the complexity of consumers’ micro decisions. One of the limitations of normative search theory is that it fails to

recognize that markets vary in how easy or difficult it is for consumers to make a purchase decision. By contrast, we suggest that the complexity of this decision is an important determinant of search behavior. The complexity of searchers' micro decisions is inversely related to differences between products in terms of total utility (Shugan 1980). We distinguish between two facets of complexity. The first is tied to the degree of variability in both quality attributes and price across the entire set of available products ("market complexity"). The second facet of decision complexity is due to the difference in subjective utility between the current alternative and the most attractive one encountered prior to it ("situational complexity"). Prior research has shown that greater uncertainty as to which alternative is the subjectively most attractive one leads to more extensive consumer search (Moorthy et al. 1998). Furthermore, work on choice deferral suggests that decision makers are more likely to delay their choices and seek new alternatives when choice among the available options is difficult (Dhar 1997). Therefore, we propose that each of the two facets of decision complexity is inversely related to the probability of stopping at a given search stage.

Decision simplification through use of perceptual cues. According to normative search theory, consumers make the micro decisions at each search stage based only the marginal cost and the expected marginal benefit of further search. One important implication of this is that products' concrete attribute levels should affect search behavior only to the extent that they are reflected in consumers' judgments of subjective product utility. This implies that a searcher processes all available pieces of attribute information about a given alternative and forms an overall evaluation of that product. This represents an instance of alternative-based, as opposed to attribute-based, information processing (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1988). However, decision makers rarely choose from a set of multi-attribute alternatives by first determining the subjective utility of each alternative and then comparing alternatives in terms of their utilities (Russo and Doshier 1983). Instead, individuals tend to use simplified decision strategies that are attribute based and involve perceptual heuristics (Tversky 1972). This suggests that, rather than integrating the multiple pieces of attribute information about a product into an overall evaluation, searchers may use the perceptual cues associated with alternatives as direct input for their micro decisions. Consequently, we propose that, in addition to utility-based considerations, consumers' search behavior is also influenced by perceptual cues in the form of products' concrete attribute levels.

Local optimizing. The normative theory of search with recall suggests that consumers' micro decisions at each search stage should be based on a comparison of the current alternative and the most attractive alternative inspected up to that point. However, this assumes that consumers have perfect memory for information about the most preferred product. By contrast, we propose that this assumption often does not hold and hypothesize that consumers will also rely upon alternatives that they have encountered since the currently most preferred one. That is, searchers will, in their micro decisions, consider normatively irrelevant information merely on the basis that it has been obtained closer in time than the relevant information. This is consistent with work on order effects suggesting that more recently encountered information tends to have greater relative salience when decision makers—as in sequential product search—obtain and evaluate information in a step-by-step fashion (Hogarth and Einhorn 1992). We, therefore, hypothesize that searchers tend to engage in local optimizing in that they overrely on recently viewed alternatives as reference points when making their micro decisions.

To test our proposed behavioral extensions of the normative theory of sequential product search, we conducted an internet-based experiment with a consumer panel in the Netherlands. Using a simulated electronic shopping interface, participants shopped for a vacation home or a stereo system, completing this task by choosing their preferred alternative. The results provide strong support for the predictions implied by our behavioral theory of search. Situational decision complexity has a negative effect on the probability of terminating search at a given stage. In addition, our results clearly suggest that consumers simplify their micro decisions by relying on perceptual cues in the form of products' concrete attribute levels. Finally, we show that searchers tend to engage in local optimizing in that they overrely on recently viewed alternatives as reference points when making their micro decisions.

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The Effect of Family Communication Patterns on Mothers' and Fathers' Perceived Influence in Family Decision Making

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Background

The influence of children on family decision making has continued to increase in recent years. Recent research estimates that children between the ages of 2 and 12 years of age indirectly influence \$320 billion worth of household purchases, in addition to the \$290 billion worth of goods and services that they purchase independently with their own money (McDonald and Lavelle 2001).

Previous research has concentrated primarily on adolescents and established that adolescent influence varies across product categories and families. Surprisingly, only one study (Foxman, Tansuhaj, and Ekstrom 1989), has examined the relationship between child's influence and family communication. That study assessed the influence of socio- and concept-oriented communication on American adolescents' purchase influence. This study, in contrast, assesses the relationship between four specific types of family communication and children's purchase influence among the Israeli parents of children between the ages of 8 and 12.

Method

A questionnaire was distributed to mothers and fathers of children between the ages of eight and twelve years old in Israel. The sample was obtained from cities in both the Northern and Southern part of Israel. A total of 260 questionnaires were distributed and 117 were returned for a response rate of 45% from different mothers and fathers. The sample consisted of primarily employed, educated, upper income families.

All measures were translated and back translated from English to Hebrew by separate bi-lingual individuals with any discrepancies settled by a meeting of the translator, the back translator, and a separate bi-lingual individual.

Two dimensions of family communication were assessed and four types of family communication were created based on a median split of these dimensions. Both were assessed with Moschis, Moore, and Smith's (1984) scale which included a total of ten items. Typical items for these dimensions were: "I tell my child that buying things that he/she likes is important, even if others don't like them," for concept orientation, and "I tell my child what things he/she should buy" for socio-orientation. All items were measured on a 5-point scale with 1 being very seldom and 5 being very often.

Child's influence (Mangleburg, Grewal, Bristol 1999) was measured for three product categories: durables, non-durables, and children's products. Durable products included a family TV, living-room furniture, and a microwave. Non-durable products included family toothpaste, family cereal, family sweets, and family soft drinks, while children's products included children's clothing, a discman, children's bed sheets, deodorant, movie, shampoo, and aftershave / perfume. All three scales were measured on a seven point scale where 1=the child makes the decision alone to 7=the parent makes the decision alone.

A MANOVA was conducted with mothers' or fathers' perceived influence of their children for durables, non-durables, and children's products as the dependent variables and family communication pattern as the independent variable.

Findings

The influence of product type can also be assessed and our findings are consistent with the literature regarding this issue. The higher mean value for family durables than for non-durables or children's use products indicate that children have a lower level of influence on these products. This finding is consistent with findings among adolescents and their families, where the perceived influence of the adolescent varies inversely with the expense and importance of the product with some consideration given to the extent of product use by the adolescent (Foxman and Tansuhaj 1988; Foxman, Tansuhaj, and Ekstrom 1989; Moschis and Moore 1979; Beatty and Talpade 1994).

Differences across family communication patterns were generally consistent with previous theory and findings. Child's influence was generally highest for pluralistic and consensual parents, which is consistent with Foxman, Tansuhaj, and Ekstrom's (1989) study where the authors found that adolescents had more influence in concept-oriented family communication environments. More specifically, pluralistic parents allowed their children a significantly higher level of influence than protective or laissez-faire parents for durables, a significantly higher level of influence than protective parents for non-durables, and a significantly higher level of influence than all groups, including consensual parents, for children's products.

Gender differences were also found among family communication patterns. The observed differences among family communication patterns, moreover, fit traditional gender roles quite well, where females are considered more communal and males are considered more agentic. Mothers were categorized primarily as pluralistic or consensual. Fathers, on the other hand, were more likely to be categorized as protective (high on vertical socio-oriented communication but low on horizontal, concept orientated communication).

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The Role of Culture and Gender in Consumer Information Processing Styles: Exploring the Effects on Ad Memory and Attitude

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Two information processing styles, relational and item-specific processing, have recently been proposed as an alternative to the magnitude of elaboration to influence consumers' memory and attitude toward brands and ads (e.g. Bellezza et al. 1977; Bower 1970; Einstein and Hunt 1980; Meyers-Levy 1991). Relational processing is defined as the encoding of similarities or commonalities among discrete items. It is also referred to as organizational processing and can be induced by, for example, showing context-focused pictures, pictures of situations where the product can be used. Item-specific processing, however, focuses on the distinctiveness or uniqueness of each specific item. It is usually regarded as a kind of in-depth processing of single items and can be activated by, for instance, showing pictures of specific product attributes (e.g. Malaviya et al. 1996). This theory also posits that people with increased relational processing often demonstrate better performance in categorization tasks, whereas increased item-specific processing will lead to better performance in recognition tasks. Further, the activation of both processing types is required for optimal recall given the complementary properties of the two.

Though theoretically informative, this theory has only been empirically tested by a few studies, so it is important to further examine its viability by applying the theory to different experimental conditions. Moreover, while most previous studies focused on the effects of the two processing styles, little has been done about the antecedents. My current study therefore tries to extend extant theorizing by investigating culture and gender as two determinants of the two processing styles. Specifically, my research questions include: 1) how easterners and westerners/females and males differ in their preferences for these two processing styles: relational vs. item-specific; and 2) how those inclinations interact with the characteristics of the stimuli (such as ads) and what memory & attitude effects will occur.

Two streams of literature provide important insights for the above questions. First, numerous cross-cultural studies have suggested that westerners hold an independent self-view, whereas easterners have an interdependent self-view (e.g. Fiske et al. 1998). Such different self-views can lead to distinctive cognitive consequences such as different self-regulatory goals (Aaker and Sengupta 2000), different accessibility of certain self-knowledge (Markus and Kitayama 1991; Trafimow et al. 1991), and distinctive cognitive styles. For instance, it has been shown that easterners are more likely to process information in a holistic fashion, while westerners have a preference for focusing on single items, for breaking items into components, and for conducting linear and deterministic analysis (e.g. Nisbett et al. 2001). It seems to suggest that westerners, with a dominant independent self-view, are more likely to view things as separate and independent items and to emphasize the distinctiveness and uniqueness of single items. It follows that when processing message, they will devote more cognitive efforts to the specificity or distinctiveness of each item rather than the relationships among each item. However, easterners may be more likely to view the world as interconnected and they may pay more attention to the relationships among things or people. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that easterners are more likely to adopt a dominant relational processing style.

Second, evidence from the literature of gender differences has suggested that men are generally assumed to be more agentic or achievement-oriented. They tend to hold a preference for viewing things as separate, unique, and independent from the collective. By contrast, females are more communal or affiliation-oriented. They focus more on interpersonal affiliations and relationships between the self and others, thus naturally having the tendency to view things in a more connected and interdependent way and to devote more attention to the relationships between disparate items (e.g. Cross and Madison, 1997; Meyers-Levy, 1988). Such gender difference may be a result of the interplay of various biological/neurological characteristics and the different social roles men and women have been playing along human history (e.g. Eagly 1987; Meyers-Levy, 1988; Buss, 1995; Kashima et al, 1995). Therefore, it seems reasonable to argue that females and males may also differ in their preferences for these two processing styles. Specifically, I hypothesize that females are more likely to adopt a dominant relational processing style, whereas males are more likely to focus on item-specific processing.

Two experiments were conducted to test the above hypotheses. In study 1, both American and Chinese subjects were presented with a list of pseudo-brand names paired with respective product category information. Their different processing styles were assessed by two memory tests: recognition and categorization. Results showed that Americans had a higher mean score than did Chinese subjects in the recognition test ($p < .05$), whereas in the categorization test, Chinese demonstrated better performance than did Americans, although the difference was not statistically significant ($p > .05$). Results also revealed a strong main effect of gender as predicted ($p < .01$). That is, females had a higher mean score than did males in the categorization test, whereas males performed better in the recognition test. Altogether, the results provided strong support for my hypothesis of gender difference in processing styles, although my prediction of cultural differences was only partially supported.

In study 2, subjects were shown an ad for a mobile phone. It was a 2 (culture) X 2 (gender) X 2 (picture conditions) factorial design. Attribute- or context-focused pictures were presented in the ad to activate either a relational or item-specific processing style. The dependent variables included free recall, attitude toward the product, and purchase intention. Results indicated a significant culture-by-picture interaction effect ($p < .05$). Specifically, Americans demonstrated better recall performance in the context-focused picture condition, whereas Chinese's recall scores were higher in the attribute-focused condition. The 2-way interaction effect on attitude was also marginally significant ($p = .09$). Further analysis showed that Chinese evaluated the product higher in the attribute-focused than in the context-focused picture condition, but Americans' attitude toward the product did not differ in the two picture conditions. As for gender, the results revealed a strong gender-by-picture interaction effect on recall; that is, females recalled more ad information in the attribute-focused picture condition, whereas males showed better recall performance in the context-focused condition.

Finally, practical implications for international advertising strategies, particularly for the design of ad visual information, were

discussed based upon the findings. Future research is needed to further clarify the effects of the two processing styles on memory and particularly on attitude. It is also important to explore other ad execution methods by which the two processing styles can be activated.

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Happiness in a Box. The Magic of Packaging at McDonald's

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the magic of Happy Meal boxes in a Swedish context. That packaging dissociates commodities from production process and standardisation is often claimed. The paper suggests that the understanding of the Happy Meal box and its relation to the child might be enlarged by the help of Latour-inspired French sociologist Madeleine Akrich (1994). According to her, a package (or any object) can be understood as a "script" or a "scenario" of the company's vision of the child and of the world. Not, however, a script in terms of an idea to be interpreted by the receiver, but in terms of a design or blueprint inscribed on the object. The package is designed to be handled by a child with certain preferences and competencies that is part of a cultural and social context of a certain kind. Which child subjectivities that are actually produced, is not at all presupposed, but produced in the meeting between the package and the child. It depends on the potentials and qualities of both parts that are realised and linked together at the meeting. Using this theoretical framework, Swedish Happy Meal boxes from 1979 till today and the toys included are analysed. The focus is on inscribed child subjectivities. The results show that the child inscribed in the late 70s boxes is a radiant but obedient child. The overall representation referred to was a Rousseauian, playing, natural child, even though with hedonistic overtones: that play demands playthings. In the 1990's there is a new inscription on the boxes and toys of a media wise child, familiar with the commercial world. This is a rather choosy child, not easily satisfied, a demanding child, that adults must make an effort to please. The level of what accounts for as an experience is all the time raised; bigger toys, in several parts, that can be handled in ever more refined ways. This inscribed child is more equal to adults, no longer living in the protective cocoon of the home, but in the same, commercialised, medialised society as their parents. A child with the right to consume experiences, the right to consume his or her subjectivity. Part of the explanation can be the ambivalence among adults to the combination of children and consumption, argued by historian Gary Cross (2002). Western parents consider children as creatures to be protected from commercialism and, at the same time, as recipients of consumer spending. Children serve as guarantors of innocence, naivety, simplicity, and the sanctities of private life and as valves of adult desire to consume. Merchandisers quickly learn to exploit the youthful desire, provoking anger among adults/parents, wanting to maintain children's "wondrous innocence", Cross maintains. Maybe it is this anger, or at least hesitation among many Swedish parents, that is the reason for the recent development. Maybe the child script produced by McDonald's during the late 90s has given birth to a child that is regarded as too fastidious, too spoilt and too competent to agree with a Swedish audience, a child regarded as having too many traits of the "cool child", that Cross argues have followed the child characterised by "wondrous innocence", a child script that needs to be supplemented by a design of a child defined as learning, growing, put in place in relations to adults by the help of pedagogical games and activities. A first example is "Learn for life", in cooperation with the non-profit association "Movement for reading", resulting in a Happy Meal with children's books, small booklets with covers, that were distributed in 1 _ million copies at all the McDonald's restaurants in Sweden during the spring of 2001. In 2002 the campaign was followed by "Play & Learn CD-ROM". During three weeks time six

pedagogic CD-ROM discs were included in the Happy Meal, with titles like "Maths", "Pre-school", "First Grade" and "English". Also CD-ROM Happy Meal was an immediate success and was later during the fall of 2002 followed by "Clever and fun Happy Meal", consisting of six different activity books, learning children "useful facts", like how to make a kite and how to equip your bike in a fun way. McDonald's chooses to prolong new, supplementing values already via the packages. At the bags with the pedagogical CD-ROM games, the words "Play & Learn" are repeated in large letters and the paper is filled with drawings seemingly made by children, all in order to elucidate and prolong the value of the disc. Another kind of child subjectivity is inscribed; another type of action is presupposed. The urge to learn is emphasizes, as well as values like curiosity, fantasy, and creativity. The fanciful, creative child in the new knowledge society. But it is equally important that aspects of learning do not become too prominent. Most important is experience value and it is the "experience part" that is the most important to go in for in the years ahead, the marketing manager argues. Pedagogical values and Swedish morality of moderation is absent. "A birthday party at McDonald's is a way for you as a parent to make your child the centre of attraction, without reservation.... The fact is that the restaurants arranging the parties are built just to make children have fun and feel at home!" the homepage is blazoning. Obviously the child in the experience economy should develop his or her creativity and fantasy with the help of the artefacts of consumer culture. It is all about consuming qualities and subjectivities.

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Intergenerational Influence in Mothers and Young Adult Daughters

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

It is commonly believed that parents are instrumental in shaping, through the socialization process, their children's values, attitudes and behaviors. Consumer research, for example, suggests that this intergenerational influence is found in the similarity between children's marketplace beliefs and behaviors and those of their parents (Arndt 1971; Heckler, Childers and Arunachalam 1989; Moore and Berchmans 1996; Moore and Lutz 1988; Woodson, Childers and Winn 1976). However, the degree to which this intergenerational influence occurs, its scope and the conditions that affect it are not well known.

This study responds to a pressing need for empirical research in this area (e.g., John 1999; Moore, Wilkie, and Lutz 2002; Viswanathan, Childers, and Moore 2000) by exploring two main issues. The first issue is to identify the actual extent of intergenerational similarity between parent and young adult offspring, specifically mothers and college-age daughters. We address concerns raised elsewhere (e.g., Acock 1984; Viswanathan, Childers, and Moore 2000) about the use of inadequate measures in intergenerational research by employing measures that have been well validated in prior work. Moreover, evidence supplied by earlier studies regarding the extent of intergenerational similarity may be more speculative than originally thought, owing to an inappropriate standard of comparison by which intergenerational influence was judged. We attempt to overcome this limitation by using a more valid standard of comparison.

The second issue is enhancing our understanding of factors that may affect the intergenerational influence of preferences and consumption orientations. One factor suggested to be important in consumer socialization is family communication (e.g., Carlson, Walsh, Laczniak, and Grossbart 1994; Moschis 1985). Here we investigate the degree to which daughters' prediction accuracy, an outcome measure of the effectiveness of parent-child communication (Chaffee and McLeod 1968; Moore and Lutz 1988; Moschis 1985, 1988), affects the similarity of preferences and consumption orientations among mothers and daughters. Additionally, addressing the "surprisingly small amount of research that exists on this topic" (John 1999, p. 206), in this study we examine differences in intergenerational similarity that may occur because of differential influence from peers arising from daughter's tendency to conform.

Research Hypotheses

H1: The similarity between mothers and daughters is greater than the nominal effect for (a) brand preferences; (b) price-quality schema; (c) convenience orientation; (d) value consciousness; (e) prestige sensitivity; and (f) brand name-quality schema.

H2: Daughter's prediction accuracy is positively related to mother/daughter similarity of (a) brand preferences; (b) price-quality schema; (c) convenience orientation; (d) value consciousness; (e) prestige sensitivity; and (f) brand name-quality schema.

H3: Compared to low-ATSCI daughters, high-ATSCI daughters will exhibit less similarity with mothers regarding (a) brand preferences; (b) price-quality schema; (c) convenience orientation; (d) value consciousness; (e) prestige sensitivity; and (f) brand name-quality schema.

Method

Data were obtained through 65 mother and young adult daughter dyads. Daughter's prediction accuracy and ATSCI are independent variables in this study. The extent of intergenerational influence is the main dependent variable in this study. As in past research, it is operationalized as the mother/daughter agreement regarding brand preference and consumption values. However, stimulated by the real group vs. nominal group testing paradigm used in certain quantitative applications in focus group research (e.g., Fern 1982), in this study we use the nominal dyad as the basis of comparison. Specifically, we constructed nominal mother-daughter dyads by taking real dyads, randomizing the daughters, and then regrouping mothers with the randomized daughters; we repeated this process 250 times in order to obtain stable estimates of means for nominal dyads. In the nominal dyads, the level of agreement is regarded as the nominal effect from factors other than intergenerational transfer; we use this effect as a benchmark to test the extent of intergenerational influence.

Results

Paired *t*-tests and multiple regressions were conducted to test the research hypotheses. Results show that in all consumption domains tested, mother-daughter agreement in nominal dyads is significantly greater than zero, supporting our criticism of past research that has used simple agreement to indicate intergenerational transfer. Simple agreement appears to overstate the degree of congruence between mothers and daughters due to intergenerational transfer. Regarding the hypotheses, H1 (a), (b), (c), (d), and (f) are supported, while H1 (e) is not.

Further, it is found that more agreement exists between mothers and daughters for those daughters who know more about their mothers' preferences and marketplace orientations. Results support H2 (a) through (f).

For H3, only (e) is supported and (a) receives marginal support ($t=-1.89$, $p=.06$). It appears that children's ATSCI may impact intergenerational transfer of brand preferences, but not consumption orientations. The one exception was prestige sensitivity, H3 (e). A possible reason is that brand choice behavior is more socially visible than beliefs and values and, therefore, may be more prone to influence from peers. Similarly, prestige sensitivity reflects a person's usage of higher-priced brands to gain social status, thus it has more socially visible behavioral referent than the other consumption orientations.

Conclusions

This study adds to the growing body of research in consumer socialization and intergenerational influences. Like earlier work (e.g., Moore and Lutz 1988), we study transmission of consumer values and beliefs from parent to child; however, unlike this prior

work, we examine consumption-relevant constructs that have been well validated in past research, adding to the ability to generalize and make theoretical advancement. Our method of analysis offers several advancements over prior work. One of these advances is using the nominal dyad, created by the random pairing of mothers and daughters, as a baseline for comparison. Thus, we attempt to control for external influences (e.g., market share, local norms) on dependent measures typically examined in intergenerational research, such as brand preference or value agreement.

Intergenerational research is necessary to more fully understand the processes involved in consumer socialization. Future research should explore the domain differences of influence (e.g., product category differences) as well as influence strategies. Cross-cultural research in this area is also greatly needed.

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Relative Judgments in a Competitive Ad Context

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ABSTRACT

This study suggests that the competing ad in an ad-viewing context can alter participants' evaluations of the target ad and the target brand. Results of two experiments have indicated that, for a new brand, the diagnosticity and effectiveness of ad messages is determined by the uniqueness of product attributes featured in the ads. Further, findings have demonstrated that perceived ad diagnosticity affects participants' ratings of ad liking and ad persuasiveness, thereby influencing their brand evaluations. However, for a familiar brand, participants' existing brand attitudes are more diagnostic than ad messages. Therefore, when viewing an ad for a familiar brand, participants' post-exposure brand evaluations are determined by their existing brand attitudes, not by the uniqueness of the featured product attributes, ad liking or ad persuasiveness.

Consumer researchers have argued that judgments of a product are affected not just by the product's features, but also by the features of products that are judged simultaneously (e.g., Farley, Katz, & Lehman, 1978; Lynch, Chakravarti & Mitra, 1991). Implicit in this argument is the assumption that, in a competitive ad-viewing context, ads, as well as advertised brands, may be evaluated in a relative sense. Surprisingly, this assumption has received little attention in advertising research. Rather, recent research exploring the influence of context on the effectiveness of advertising has focused on program context. Even when the interference from competing ads has been explored, the exploration has been limited to reduced message recall for the target ad, rather than the changes in brand judgments resulting from the interplay of ad strategies by the competing brands. Therefore, how competitors' ads in the ad-viewing context affect judgments of a target brand needs more research attention and will be the focus of this paper.

Given that segmentation strategies are nearly universally adopted by the media, each program, magazine or newspaper is specifically designed to attract certain segments. As a result, it is common to see different brands that appeal to similar segments in the same product category selecting the same media vehicles for ad placement. Serious clutter problems may result from this practice. Since cognitive psychologists have argued that individuals rarely retrieve all the information that is potentially relevant for judgments, but rather rely on what is available in their working memory to form judgments (Wyer, Bodenhausen & Srull, 1984), it is therefore reasonable to assume that an ad or a product will be judged differently when embedded in different contexts.

Drawing upon Feldman and Lynch's (1988) Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model, this paper will explore how relative judgments may occur in different ad contexts, where the diagnosticity of a piece of accessible information varies. The Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model proposes that the likelihood that a particular piece of information will be used as an input for judgments and inferences depends on the accessibility of the information, as well as the diagnosticity of the information to the judgment or inference. Specifically, this study proposes that, in a competitive ad-viewing context, ad diagnosticity is a function of the relative uniqueness of featured product attributes. Most importantly, when competitors' ad messages are present, ads featuring unique product attributes, in comparison to ads featuring shared product features, will be perceived to be more diagnostic, thereby increasing participants' favorable responses toward the ads, as well as the advertised products. Experiment One will specifically test the effectiveness of presenting unique product attributes in a competitive ad context.

Experiment Two will provide a comparison to show that the effects of presenting different product attributes will only emerge in a competitive ad context, not in an ad-viewing context in which competing ads are not present. Further, Experiment Two will specifically test the process via which perceived ad diagnosticity affects brand evaluations through its influences on ad liking and ad persuasiveness ratings. Moreover, Experiment Two argues a step further that the different judgments incurred by ad viewing contexts will only be observed for familiar brands. Additionally, this study will provide more evidence for the proposed process by testing the relative influence of participants' existing brand attitudes, ad persuasiveness and ad liking in evaluating a familiar brand.

AD COMPETITION ON BRAND EVALUATIONS

A fair amount of research has indicated that competing ads in the viewing environment cause memory interference. As the number of ads present in the ad processing environment increases, recall of brand information declines (Keller, 1991; Pillai, 1990). However, the interference caused by ad competition is not limited to message retrieval failure. Another important concern is the possible influence from competing ads on brand evaluations. However, past explorations were mainly concerned with the number of competing ads present in the viewing context of the target ad (e.g., Keller, 1991; Baumgardner, et al., 1983). In general, these findings have suggested that, as the degree of ad clutter increases, evaluations of the target brand deteriorate, especially when the competing ads are for brands in the same category. Given that a typical ad-viewing situation can be characterized by serious clutter from competing ads in the same product category and evaluation deterioration is likely to be critical, it is thus important to further explore this issue.

THE ACCESSIBILITY-DIAGNOSTICITY MODEL

It is well accepted among cognitive psychologists that individuals are cognitive misers and are not likely to engage in effortful information processing when it is unnecessary. Wyer and Srull (1986) have proposed that, in making judgments, individuals first search their working memory and rely mainly on the information that is accessible there. Due to the limited effort individuals are likely to engage in, what is more accessible is more likely to be used as input for making judgments. Within this paradigm, Feldman and Lynch's (1988) Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model has extended Wyer and Srull's argument further by suggesting that the likelihood that a particular piece of information will be used as an input for judgments and inferences depends not only on the accessibility of the information but also on the diagnosticity or relevance of the information to the judgments or inferences.

In Feldman and Lynch's (1988) theorization, even though a piece of accessible information is more likely to be diagnostic, being accessible is not sufficient for that information to be used as an input for judgments. The likelihood that any information will be used as an input for later judgments is: (1) a positive function of the accessibility of the earlier information in memory, (2) a positive function of the diagnosticity of the earlier information for the judgments, (3) a negative function of the accessibility of alternative inputs, and (4) a negative function of the diagnosticity of these alternative inputs. Similar to Kisielius and Sternthal's (1986) Availability-Valence Model of consumer judgments, the Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model has proposed that the evaluation of the target is also determined by the valence of the information that is used as input for the judgment. To the extent the diagnostic

information is positive, the target object will be evaluated in a more positive light.

The diagnosticity of a piece of information is not objective, but depends on the relative informativeness of the accessible information. For example, Herr, et al. (1991) have argued that prior product beliefs, being persistent and resistant pieces of information, are more likely to be perceived as more diagnostic than other product information. Moreover, Purohit and Srivastava (2001) have suggested that brand reputation and retailer reputation are high-scope cues, cues that evolve over time, whereas product warranty is a low-scope cue, one that is more transient in nature. Most importantly, in Purohit and Srivastava's empirical explorations, high-scope cues have been shown to be more diagnostic than low-scope cues in consumers' brand judgments.

Drawing upon the Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model, this study proposes that information contained in competitors' ads in the same context will affect the relative diagnosticity of the product information featured in the target ad and thus affect participants' evaluations of the target ad and the target brand. Specifically, presenting unique attributes will increase the diagnosticity of the ad and generate more favorable ad attitudes and brand evaluations.

DIAGNOSTICITY OF UNIQUE PRODUCT FEATURES

Comparative advertising literature suggests that how typical a featured product attribute is can affect the effectiveness of comparative advertising (Pechmann & Ratneshwar, 1991). These findings suggest that the effectiveness of product attributes presented in comparative ads is not determined by their absolute values but by their relative uniqueness. Based on similar reasoning, this paper argues that, in a competitive viewing context, the effectiveness of featured product attributes is a function of its uniqueness. A product attribute that is featured in all the ads is less diagnostic than the unique product attribute that is only featured in an ad for one brand. In line with the Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model, this study proposes that, in a competitive ad context, to the degree the featured product attributes are unique and positive, the more likely it is that they will generate more positive ad and brand evaluations.

H1: Participants rate the target ad more positively when a unique attribute is presented than when a shared attribute is presented in terms of ad liking (H1a), ad persuasiveness (H2a) and brand evaluations (H1c).

EXPERIMENT ONE

Methodology

Design

An experimental study was employed to investigate the hypotheses stated earlier. This was a one-factor experimental design: product attributes featured in the target ad (two levels: shared versus unique, see Table 1). Participants were exposed to one ad for the target brand and one ad for the competing brand. The order of the two ads to which participants were exposed was rotated and no order effects were detected on any of the dependent measures; therefore, participants' responses for ads presented in different orders were collapsed in subsequent analyses.

Selection of Products and Brands and Stimuli Development

A pretest facilitated selecting sneakers as the product category. Another pretest (N=40) determined the brand name for the target product. A real brand, Sperry, not known to any participants in the pretest, was selected to be the target brand. The competing brand was New Balance, which is ranked second in market share in the area where the experiment was conducted. Stimuli ads were

created by professionals working at Ogilvy & Mather Ad Agency were inserted among three genuine filler ads.

Participants and Procedures

This study recruited two hundred and two participants from undergraduate classes at a university in a metropolitan area. The sample was comprised of an equal number of males and females. Participants were seated and read brief instructions about the procedures and the purpose of the study. Participants were told that the study involved research about how different layouts of printed ads impact viewers' information processing. Then they were asked to read a packet of five ads (two stimuli ads and three filler ads) that were bound together as they would appear in magazines. Each stimuli ad was preceded and followed by a filler ad. After reading the ads, the moderators collected the stimuli packets and distributed questionnaires for participants to complete.

Independent Variable-Uniqueness of Featured Attributes

Based on the results of a pretest, a comfortable fit, the most important attribute, was selected to be the shared attribute that was featured in the target ad as well as in the competing ad, whereas waterproof was chosen to be the unique attribute for the target brand and was only emphasized in the target ad.

Dependent Measures

Participants rated their liking of each ad on a five-item seven-point Likert scale. The five items were adopted from Madden, Allen, & Twible (1988). Cronbach's reliability alphas of ad liking were deemed satisfactory at .93 for Sperry and .92 for New Balance. Participants also rated the persuasiveness of each ad on a four-item seven-point Likert scale to measure participants' perceptions of the ads' persuasiveness. The four items were adopted from Beltramini's (1982) advertising believability scale. Cronbach's reliability alphas of ad persuasiveness were deemed satisfactory at .85 for both Sperry and New Balance. Brand attitudes were measured with a five-item seven-point Likert scale. The items were adopted from Mitchell and Olson (1981) and Holbrook and Batra (1987). Cronbach's reliability alphas for this scale were deemed satisfactory at .92 for Sperry and .93 for New Balance.

Results and Analyses

Hypotheses 1a-1c examined the main effect of attribute types featured in the target ad on participants' ratings of ad liking, ad persuasiveness, and brand attitudes. ANOVA indicated that the main effect on each variable was significant (for ad liking, $M_{\text{shared}}=3.53$, $M_{\text{unique}}=4.01$, $F(1, 201)=8.92$, $p<.01$; for ad persuasiveness, $M_{\text{shared}}=3.53$, $M_{\text{unique}}=4.04$, $F(1, 201)=11.97$, $p<.01$; for brand attitudes, $M_{\text{shared}}=3.65$, $M_{\text{unique}}=4.11$, $F(1, 201)=6.73$, $p<.01$). Therefore, hypothesis 1a through hypothesis 1c were supported.

Discussions

Findings of this experiment suggest that the uniqueness of the target brand's attribute relative to that of the competing brand's boosts participants' responses to the target brand. It seems that, for products that are not known to the audience, product attributes underscored in ads have a determining influence on ad persuasiveness and brand evaluations. Even though the featured product characteristic is not as important as the shared characteristic, it provides more diagnostic information than the shared one. However, this experiment used only one unique and one shared attribute. It is possible that the results found in Experiment One might be attributed to the novelty of the product attribute selected for Sperry. Moreover, this experiment did not explicitly test the process via which perceived ad diagnosticity affected brand evaluations. Finally, to provide a stronger test, it is important to compare how participants evaluate the target brand when the competing ad is

TABLE 1
Research Design for Experiment One

Cell	Uniqueness of Product Attributes	Presence of the Competitor's Ad (New Balance)	Presence of the Target Ad (Sperry)
1	Shared	Attributes-Comfort	Attributes-Comfort
2	Unique	Attributes-Comfort	Attributes-Waterproof

present, as opposed to when the competing ad is not. Therefore, more replications rotating the same product attributes for the two brands were necessary to help us reach stronger conclusions regarding the influence of attribute uniqueness.

COMPETITIVE AD CONTEXTS VERSUS NON-COMPETITIVE AD CONTEXTS

The Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model proposes that available information may not always be diagnostic. Different contexts will alter the relevance and diagnosticity of a piece of available information and determine the likelihood that it will be used as input for judgments. Therefore, it is important to compare the different patterns of results generated from contexts wherein the target brand is evaluated alone, as opposed to when the target brand is evaluated in a competitive ad context. Specifically, it theorizes that, in a competitive ad context, promoting unique attributes is more effective than promoting shared attributes in terms of improving participants' ad liking, perceptions of ad persuasiveness, brand attitudes and purchase intentions. In contrast, in a non-competitive ad context, all the featured product attributes should be similar in terms of diagnosticity if they are equivalent in importance to start with. Therefore, when competitors' ads are not present, what attributes the target brand promotes in the ad will not influence how participants evaluate the ad and the advertised brand.

Additionally, in order to argue that ads featuring unique product attributes lead to more effective responses mainly due to their diagnosticity, it is necessary to put this assumption to the test. Thus, other than ad liking, ad persuasiveness and brand evaluations, this paper will specifically examine whether or not, in a competitive ad-viewing context, ads promoting a target brand on unique attributes are perceived to be more diagnostic than ads promoting the target brand on shared attributes. Whether difference will emerge for purchase intentions will also be tested.

H2: When there are ads for competitors in the same ad-viewing context, emphasizing unique attributes generates higher ratings in terms of ad diagnosticity (H2a), ad liking (H2b), ad persuasiveness (H2c), brand evaluations (H2d) and purchase intentions (H2e), whereas when there are no ads for competitors, featuring various attributes does not generate different ratings.

Most importantly, the central idea behind the Accessibility-Diagnosticity model is that the more diagnostic the information is, the more likely it is that the piece of information will be considered when individuals make judgments. Also, if the diagnostic information provides positive information, the target object will be evaluated more favorably. It is important to test this underlying process. Specifically, how participants perceive the ad in terms of its diagnosticity will affect their ad liking and their ratings of ad

persuasiveness, which in turn will affect their brand evaluations.

H3: Ad diagnosticity will affect brand evaluations through its influence on ad liking and ad persuasiveness.

BRAND FAMILIARITY AND THE UNIQUENESS OF PRODUCT FEATURES

Will the cognitive interference effects be different when the brand in the competitive ad context is familiar to participants? In a typical ad-viewing context, different types of information cues are available to aid ad processing, some of which are ad-based, and some of which may be retrieved from a participant's memory. Preexisting product preference is one of the potential information cues that can be activated from an individual's memory when processing ad messages. Most importantly, it has been shown that preexisting product preference is perceived to be more diagnostic than other attribute cues (e.g., Herr, et al., 1991; Purohit & Srivastava, 2001). Purohit and Srivastava (2001) have also demonstrated that when multiple information cues suggesting different directions of valence are available in the same context, a participant's existing preference, being a diagnostic cue, dominates the judgment process. In their study, a positive warranty, being a less diagnostic cue, will not override the influence of a negative brand preference, which is relatively more diagnostic than the valence of the warranty.

Drawing upon the Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model and Purohit and Srivastava's (2001) arguments, this paper proposes that, for familiar brands, existing brand evaluations will be more diagnostic than attribute information. Therefore, participants' evaluations of a familiar brand will not be affected by the attributes that are presented by competing brands. In contrast, when evaluating an unfamiliar brand, an existing product evaluation is neither available nor accessible. Ad messages thus provide diagnostic information. Under these circumstances, judgments of the unfamiliar brand are more subject to the influence of attributes promoted by competing brands. This paper theorizes that evaluations of brands with established preferences are less likely to be affected by attributes featured in competing ads or the relative uniqueness of promoted attributes. On the other hand, for unfamiliar products, the uniqueness of product attributes featured in their own ads, compared to those featured in competitors' ads, is more diagnostic and will alter the way participants evaluate the ads and the products.

H4: When an unfamiliar brand is considered, emphasizing unique attributes generates higher ratings than shared attributes in terms of ad diagnosticity (H4a), ad liking (H4b), ad persuasiveness (H4c), brand evaluations (H4d) and purchase intentions (H4e), whereas when a familiar brand is considered, ads emphasizing either unique or shared attributes do not generate different ratings.

TABLE 2
Research Design for Experiment Two

Cell		Presence of the Competitor's Ad (Nike)		Presence of the Target Ad (Sperry)
1	Yes	Attributes-Set A (shared)	Yes	Attributes-Set A (shared)
2		Attributes-Set B (unique)		Attributes-Set A (unique)
3		Attributes-Set A (unique)		Attributes-Set B (unique)
4		Attributes-Set B (shared)		Attributes-Set B (unique)
5	No		Yes	Attributes-Set A
6				Attributes-Set B

To argue that the reason why evaluations of a familiar brand are not affected by ad content is due to the influence of existing brand liking, a piece of more diagnostic information, it is important to explicitly test whether or not, when evaluating a familiar product, participants' existing product evaluations will significantly account for the variance in their brand evaluations. At the same time, participants' responses toward the ad in terms of liking or perceived persuasiveness should not affect their brand evaluations.

H5: When the product is familiar, participants' existing product evaluations will significantly predict their brand evaluations, whereas their perceived ad liking and ad persuasiveness will not.

EXPERIMENT TWO

Methodology

Design

This was a two-factor experimental design. The two factors were: presence of competitor's ad (two levels: presence versus absence), product attributes featured in the target ad (two levels: set A versus set B, see Table 2). Participants in the condition in which the competitor's ad was present were exposed to one ad for the competing brand and one ad for the target brand, whereas participants in the condition in which the competitor's ad was absent were exposed to only one ad for the target brand.

Selection of Products and Brands and Stimuli

Sneakers were also selected as the product category in Experiment Two. The same brand, Sperry, was selected to be the target brand. The competing brand was Nike, which was ranked top in market share in the area where the experiment was conducted. Stimuli ads were created by professionals. To reduce confounding effects from using visuals that may generate different favorable ratings in different conditions, visuals were pretested to be similar in terms of liking, interesting, attention drawing, attractive and suitable for advertising shoes.

Participants and Procedures

This study recruited eighty-three participants from undergraduate classes at a university in a metropolitan area. Forty-eight percent of the participants were male. Participants were told that the study was composed of two sessions. The first session was supposedly conducted by the Consumer Protection Committee. The purpose was to understand how college students make purchase decisions regarding ten high involving product categories in order to establish a web site that would provide important product information to college students when they were contemplating a purchase in these categories. Participants were told that to prevent fatigue in answering all the questions regarding each of the ten

product categories, each participant would be randomly assigned two product categories on which to provide his/her views. The product categories assigned to the participants were sneakers and watches. Participants rated the important features they would consider when they purchased sneakers and watches, as well as their evaluations of the leading sneaker and watch brands in the market. The procedures were designed to prevent participants from guessing the true purpose of the study. Participants were told that the second session involved a study being conducted by a professor in the advertising department. The research was designed to understand how different layouts of printed ads impact viewers' information processing. Then, depending on which condition they were assigned to, they were either asked to read a packet of four ads (one stimuli ad for Nike, one stimuli ad for Sperry and two filler ads) or a packet of three ads (one stimuli ad for Sperry and two filler ads). Then participants rated their responses to the ads.

Independent Variables

Presence of the Competitor's Ad. Participants were either exposed to the Sperry ad alone or to both the Sperry ad and the Nike ad. In the former condition, the Sperry ad was inserted between one real ad for a watch and another ad for a soft drink. In the latter condition, the Nike ad was either presented before the Sperry ad and after the watch ad, or after the Sperry ad and before the soft drink ad.

Uniqueness of Featured Attributes. A pretest ($N=20$) asked participants in an open-ended question, the attributes they would take into consideration when they purchased a pair of sneakers. Their responses were coded and ranked. The four attributes ranked at the top were selected. They were: comfortable fit, durability, lightweight and breathability. The four attributes were grouped into two sets, with comfortable fit and lightweight being grouped together in set A and durability and breathability together in set B. The reason for rotating the two sets of attributes for the two products was to reduce confounding effects caused by the idiosyncrasy of the product attributes featured in the ads. In the analyses, the only focus will be on whether the attributes were shared attributes or unique to each brand, regardless of which set of attributes was featured in the ads.

Existing Brand Attitudes toward Nike. Brand attitudes were measured in the first stage with a five-item seven-point Likert scale. The items were adopted from Mitchell and Olson (1981). Cronbach's reliability alpha for this scale was deemed satisfactory at .91.

Dependent Measures

Participants were asked to rate ad diagnosticity on a 3-item seven-point Likert scale. Cronbach's reliability alphas for the scale were assessed at .90 for Sperry and .89 for Nike, which were both satisfactory. Participants rated their liking and the persuasiveness of each ad using the same scales as in Experiment One. Cronbach's

reliability alphas of ad liking were deemed satisfactory at .92 for Sperry and .91 for Nike and Cronbach's reliability alphas of ad persuasiveness were deemed satisfactory at .88 for Sperry and .87 for Nike. Brand attitudes were also measured using the same scale as in Experiment One. Cronbach's reliability alphas for this scale were deemed satisfactory at .90 for Sperry and .92 for Nike. Participants were asked to rate how likely they were to purchase the product in the future on a three-item seven-point Likert scale. The three items were adopted from Zhang (1996). Cronbach's reliability alpha for this scale was deemed satisfactory at .95 for Sperry and .89 for Nike.

Results and Analyses

Hypothesis 2a concerns ad diagnosticity. Analyses showed that when competing ad was present, whether or not the featured attribute was unique had a significant impact on how participants rated the ad on its diagnosticity, $F(1, 39)=5.93, p=.02, M_{\text{shared}}=3.23, M_{\text{unique}}=4.32$. However, when there was no competing ad, featuring various attributes did not have an impact on how participants rated the ad on its diagnosticity, $F(1, 42)=.03, p=.87, M_{\text{set A}}=4.00, M_{\text{set B}}=3.70$. Therefore, supportive results were found for hypothesis 2a.

Hypothesis 2b concerns ad liking. Analyses showed that when competing ad was present, whether or not the featured attribute was unique had a significant impact on how participants evaluated the ad, $F(1, 39)=13.79, p=.01, M_{\text{shared}}=3.20, M_{\text{unique}}=4.55$. However, when there was no competing ad, featuring various attributes did not have an impact on participants' ratings of ad liking, $F(1, 42)=2.22, p=.14, M_{\text{set A}}=4.53, M_{\text{set B}}=3.97$. Thus, hypothesis 2b was supported.

Hypothesis 2c concerns ad persuasiveness. Analyses showed that when competing ad was present, whether or not the featured attribute was unique affected the way participants evaluated the ad in terms of persuasiveness, $F(1, 39)=8.20, p=.01, M_{\text{shared}}=3.40, M_{\text{unique}}=4.46$. However, when there was no competing ad, featuring various attributes did not have an impact on participants' ratings of ad persuasiveness, $F(1, 42)=.19, p=.67, M_{\text{set A}}=4.13, M_{\text{set B}}=3.97$. Therefore, hypothesis 2c was supported.

Hypothesis 2d concerns brand evaluations. Analyses showed that when competing ad was present, whether or not the featured attribute was unique had a significant impact on how participants evaluated the brand, $F(1, 39)=14.59, p=.01, M_{\text{shared}}=3.26, M_{\text{unique}}=4.65$. However, when there was no competing ad, featuring various attributes did not have an impact on participants' brand evaluations, $F(1, 42)=.30, p=.59, M_{\text{set A}}=3.88, M_{\text{set B}}=4.10$. The clear contrast provided support for hypothesis 2d.

Hypothesis 2e concerns purchase intention. Analyses showed that when competing ad was present, whether or not the featured attribute was unique had a significant impact on participants' levels of purchase intention toward the advertised brand, $F(1, 39)=7.91, p=.01, M_{\text{shared}}=1.94, M_{\text{unique}}=3.35$. However, when there was no competing ad, featuring various attributes did not have an impact on participants' levels of purchase intention, $F(1, 42)=.01, p=.99, M_{\text{set A}}=3.01, M_{\text{set B}}=3.02$. Therefore, hypothesis 2e was supported.

Hypothesis 3 suggests that ad diagnosticity will affect brand evaluations through its influence on ad liking and ad persuasiveness. Regression showed that: (1) ad diagnosticity exerted a significant impact on ad liking, $t=9.23, p<.01, b=.72$, and ad persuasiveness ratings, $t=9.76, p<.01, b=.74$; (2) ad liking and ad persuasiveness contributed significantly to brand evaluations (for ad liking, $t=10.39, p<.01, b=.76$; for ad persuasiveness, $t=10.31, p<.01, b=.75$); (3) ad diagnosticity had a significant impact on brand evaluations, $t=6.31, p=.01, b=.57$; (4) when ad diagnosticity, ad

liking and ad persuasiveness were in the equation, the impact of ad diagnosticity on brand evaluations disappeared, $t=-.28, p=.78, b=-.03$, but the impacts of ad liking and ad persuasiveness were still significant (for ad liking, $t=2.93, p=.01, b=.42$; for ad persuasiveness, $t=2.74, p<.01, b=.41$). These results supported hypothesis 3.

To test H4a-4e, repeated measure MANOVA was first conducted. The results indicated that the significance of the interaction between brand difference (Nike vs. Sperry) by uniqueness of featured attributes (unique vs. shared) on ad diagnosticity, ad liking, ad persuasiveness, brand evaluations and purchase intention was at .055, $F(1, 39)=2.47$. Hypothesis 4a concerns ad persuasiveness. ANOVA indicated that the interaction was not significant, $F(1, 39)=.53, p=.47$. Yet, whether or not the featured attribute was unique had a significant impact on how participants rated the Sperry ad on its diagnosticity, $F(1, 39)=5.93, p=.02, M_{\text{shared}}=3.23, M_{\text{unique}}=4.32$. In clear contrast, the uniqueness of the featured attributes did not have an impact on how participants rated the Nike ad on its diagnosticity, $F(1, 39)=1.89, p=.18, M_{\text{shared}}=4.38, M_{\text{unique}}=3.70$.

Hypothesis 4b concerns ad liking. ANOVA indicated that the interaction was significant, $F(1, 39)=8.81, p=.01$. Whether or not the featured attribute was unique had a significant impact on how participants evaluated the Sperry ad, $F(1, 39)=13.79, p=.01, M_{\text{shared}}=3.20, M_{\text{unique}}=4.55$. On the other hand, the uniqueness of the featured attributes did not have an impact on participants' liking of the Nike ad, $F(1, 39)=.61, p=.44, M_{\text{shared}}=4.65, M_{\text{unique}}=4.40$. Therefore, supportive results were found for hypothesis 4b.

Hypothesis 4c concerns ad persuasiveness. ANOVA indicated that the interaction was significant, $F(1, 39)=4.10, p=.05$. Whether or not the featured attribute was unique affected the way participants evaluated the Sperry ad in terms of persuasiveness, $F(1, 39)=8.20, p=.01, M_{\text{shared}}=3.40, M_{\text{unique}}=4.46$. In contrast, whether or not the featured attributes were unique did not affect how participants rated the Nike ad on persuasiveness, $F(1, 39)=.45, p=.51, M_{\text{shared}}=4.76, M_{\text{unique}}=4.50$. Therefore, hypothesis 4c was supported.

Hypothesis 4d concerns brand evaluations. ANOVA indicated that the interaction was significant, $F(1, 39)=7.75, p=.01$. Whether or not the featured attribute was unique had a significant impact on how participants evaluated Sperry, $F(1, 39)=14.59, p=.01, M_{\text{shared}}=3.26, M_{\text{unique}}=4.65$. Conversely, the uniqueness of the featured attributes did not influence participants' evaluations of Nike, $F(1, 39)=1.32, p=.26, M_{\text{shared}}=5.33, M_{\text{unique}}=5.11$. Hypothesis 4d was thus supported.

Hypothesis 4e concerns purchase intention. ANOVA indicated that the interaction was significant, $F(1, 39)=7.79, p=.01$. Whether or not the featured attribute was unique had a significant impact on participants' purchase intentions toward Sperry, $F(1, 39)=7.91, p=.01, M_{\text{shared}}=1.94, M_{\text{unique}}=3.35$. However, whether the featured attributes were unique or not did not have an impact on participants' purchase intentions toward Nike, $F(1, 39)=1.32, p=.26, M_{\text{shared}}=4.75, M_{\text{unique}}=5.34$. Therefore, hypothesis 4e was supported.

Hypothesis 5 proposes that when the product is familiar, participants' existing product evaluations will predict their brand evaluations, whereas their perceived ad liking and ad persuasiveness will not. As expected, when brand evaluations were regressed upon participants' existing attitudes toward Nike, their ad liking and their ad persuasiveness, the impact of existing ad attitudes was significant, $t=4.51, p=.01, b=.54$, yet ad liking and ad persuasiveness did not exert significant influence on brand evaluations (for ad liking, $t=.77, p=.45, b=.19$; for ad persuasiveness, $t=.78, p=.44, b=.20$). These results indicated that, when evaluating a familiar

product, existing brand attitude was a more diagnostic cue than the responses generated by one-shot ad exposure. Therefore, hypothesis 5 was supported.

Discussion

Findings of Experiment Two provided strong evidence regarding the influence of attribute uniqueness in two ways. First, the clear contrasts in terms of ratings of ad diagnosticity, ad liking, ad persuasiveness and brand liking in the two different contexts were directly presented. This indicated that it was indeed the competitive ad context that caused the differences. Second, two sets of product attributes were rotated for Nike and Sperry. This ensured that it was attribute uniqueness, not the idiosyncratic characteristics of the selected product attributes that led to different ad and brand evaluations. Additionally, Experiment Two proffered more evidence for the Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model by showing that the ads featuring unique product attributes were perceived to be more diagnostic, as well as by establishing the mediational process via which ad diagnosticity affects brand evaluations through its influence on ad liking and ad persuasiveness ratings. Experiment Two also extended the exploration of attribute uniqueness effects by demonstrating that brand familiarity moderated the influence of uniqueness of featured attributes.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Findings of the two experiments suggest that the effectiveness of advertising should not be considered without taking the competitive ad context into account. Brand judgments in a competitive advertising context are partly determined by information presented in the target ad, and partly affected by information presented in competitors' ads. The findings can be well explained by Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model, which theorizes that information that is accessible at the time judgments are made does not necessarily affect brand evaluations unless the piece of information is relatively diagnostic. Experiment Two further establishes the process via which ad diagnosticity affects ad liking and ad persuasiveness, thereby influencing participants' brand evaluations.

Ad exposure does not exert significant influence on brand evaluations for familiar products. This is consistent with Kent and Allen's (1994) findings which indicate that, in a cluttered viewing environment, consumers' ad recall for a familiar brand is less affected by exposure to competitors' ads, as well as Machleit, Allen and Madden's (1993) findings which demonstrate that consumers' brand attitudes for a familiar brand are less affected by ad exposure. Within the Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model, this study reasons that existing brand attitudes provide more diagnostic information than product information presented in ads, therefore, whether or not the featured product attributes are unique does not affect the way participants respond to ads or products, as it does when ads feature an unfamiliar product.

One of the important implications that can be derived from this study's findings is that, for advertisers of newly introduced products, it is important to use caution in selecting which product attributes to emphasize in ad messages. When a new brand introduces or highlights an attribute that is not readily associated with competing brands, more positive evaluations will be developed. In other words, me-too strategies will definitely not help a new brand. A more effective way to avoid the failure of a new product would be to focus on an important, yet less featured attribute, which will help break up ad clutter and lead to more favorable responses toward the ad and the brand, and even generate higher purchase intentions.

The final, yet most important implication for marketers, is that it is crucial to test ad effectiveness in real viewing contexts. Given that the effectiveness of ad messages may vary depending on other ads in the viewing context, the interference from these surrounding advertisements may be too important for advertisers to ignore. Overlooking the interplay between the target ad and competing ads may limit our understanding of consumers' ad-viewing processes, inflate estimates of ad effectiveness and even bias marketers' decision-making regarding which strategy is going to be effective.

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Discerning Store Brand Users from Value Consciousness Consumers: The Role of Prestige Sensitivity and Need for Cognition

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ABSTRACT

Research shows that consumers who seek value are the main purchasers of store brands or private labels. In this paper we corroborate that value consciousness is positively related to store brand purchase. We further demonstrate that two other personality traits, prestige sensitivity and need for cognition influence store brand usage. Prestige sensitivity has a direct effect, but contrary to our hypothesis, need for cognition did not. Moreover, both prestige sensitivity and need for cognition were shown to moderate the effects of value consciousness on private label usage.

DISCERNING STORE BRAND USERS FROM VALUE CONSCIOUSNESS CONSUMERS

Research interest in store brand or private label consumption has seen a revival concomitant with the rapid growth of the private label in recent years. Store brands provide fairly good quality but lower price compared to national brands, which constitutes a good value perception to some consumers and compels them to buy (e.g., Richardson, Jain and Dick 1996; Burton, et al. 1998). But national brands use sales promotions to enhance their value proposition, a tactic recommended as a way to keep the value conscious segment (e.g., Quelch and Harding 1996). Thus, it seems that for this segment in particular, competition between manufacturers and retailer has intensified, increasing the need to understand the relationship between value consciousness and store brand usage.

In line with recent research (e.g., Ailawadi, Neslin, and Gedenk 2001), the current study seeks insight into store brand usage and value seeking. We examine the relationship between value consciousness (Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, and Burton 1990) and store brand usage, proposing factors that may moderate this relationship. Specifically, we test the influence of prestige sensitivity (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer 1993) and need for cognition (Cacioppo and Petty 1982) in moderating the effect of value consciousness on consumers' purchase of store brands.

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Perceived value has long been considered an important driver of a consumer's purchase decision (e.g., Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991; Szybillo and Jacoby 1974; Zeithaml 1988). Generally, if a product provides better value than others, then consumers' purchase intention of this product will be high (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991). A simple expression of perceived value is the ratio of quality received relative to price paid (Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, and Burton 1990; Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer 1993; Monroe and Petroshius 1981). Store brands, although not providing quality as high as national brands are able to deliver high perceived value because of their lower prices, making them attractive to value-conscious consumers (Richardson, Jain and Dick 1996; Burton, et al. 1998). However, if value-conscious consumers prefer some unique benefits that cannot be met by store brands then their desire to purchase store brands might be weakened.

In particular, store brands are generally thought to suffer a deficit compared to national brands in regard to the social symbolic or image benefits they offer. Factors that increase consumer's desire for these benefits should affect store brand purchase, and additionally, may moderate value-seeking tendencies. For example, some consumers may be motivated in brand purchase by

factors related to impression management, for example social conformity and reference group influence (e.g., Bearden and Etzel 1982; Bearden and Rose 1990). One such factor is prestige sensitivity, a personality trait that reflects consumers' "favorable perceptions of the price cue based on feelings of prominence and status that higher prices signal to other people about the purchaser" (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer 1993, p. 236). To the extent consumers associate store brands with lower prices and are concerned about what using a lower-priced product may signal to significant others, store brand usage should diminish.

In addition, there is reason to believe that store brand choice may be affected by how consumers process brand-related information. The brand cue is often used as a signal of quality when other more probative information is lacking or the consumer lacks the motivation to invest cognitive resources necessary to use this information (e.g., Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991; Zeithaml 1988). Motivation is also affected by a person's need for cognition, a trait reflecting the person's inherent enjoyment of engaging in effortful thought (Cacioppo and Petty 1982). There is ample research evidence demonstrating that high need for cognition individuals engage in more information-processing activity than low need for cognition individuals (Cacioppo, et al. 1996). One study proposed that need for cognition was somehow related to store brand usage but did not find a significant effect (Ailawadi, Neslin, and Gedenk 2001). However, we believe need for cognition may yet be related to store brand usage both directly and as a moderator of the effect of value consciousness.

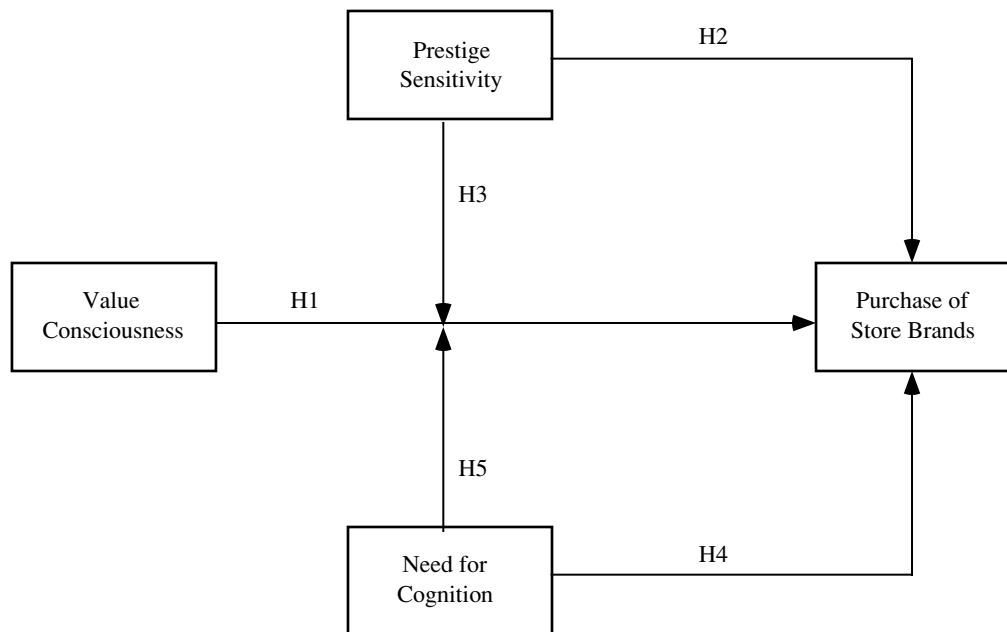
The model depicted in Figure 1 shows the proposed relationships examined in this study. In the model, prestige sensitivity and need for cognition moderate the effect of value consciousness on consumer's purchase of store brands. We now develop each hypothesis in turn.

Value Consciousness and Purchase of Store Brands

Value consciousness reflects consumers' concern for price paid relative to quality received in a purchase transaction (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer 1993). However, this does not necessarily mean any product will provide good value: low priced products provide good value to consumers only if these products also meet certain quality specifications (Corstjens and Lal 2000; Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, and Burton 1990). Although store brands used to be considered inferior to national brands, they have achieved great quality improvement in recent years (DeNitto 1993; c.f., Corstjens and Lal 2000). More and more consumers accept that store brands carry fairly good quality yet much lower price, hence good value. This is attested to by the faster growth of store brand sales than national brand sales (*Supermarket Business* 1998). Thus, to many value-conscious consumers, store brands represent a better bargain than national brands and provide good incentive to purchase. Although we contend that not all value-conscious consumers will purchase store brands, past research has demonstrated a relationship between value consciousness and store brand proneness (Burton et al. 1998). Therefore, it is proposed that,

H1: Value consciousness is positively related to purchase of store brands.

FIGURE 1
Consumers' Purchase of Store Brands



Prestige Sensitivity and Purchase of Store Brands

Prestige sensitivity is related to favorable perceptions of the price cue based on the status or prominence higher-priced products signal to others (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer 1993). Consumers with high prestige sensitivity may buy expensive goods not because of quality perceptions *per se*, but because of the perception that others may perceive them as socially positive because of the high price. Store brands are normally priced at approximately 30% lower than national brands (Information Resources Inc. 1999), thus could seldom serve the purpose of signaling prominence and status to other people. Hence, it is proposed that consumers with high prestige sensitivity will buy fewer store brands than those with low prestige sensitivity.

H2: Prestige sensitivity is negatively related to purchase of store brand.

Interaction between Value Consciousness and Prestige Sensitivity

As indicated above, in general value-conscious consumers tend to buy store brands. However, a value-conscious consumer may be high or low in prestige sensitivity. For those who are highly value-conscious as well as highly prestige sensitive, the good value provided by the store brands may not be attractive because these brands normally do not signal prominence and status to others. Value consciousness for these consumers may appear as actively pursuing name brands on promotion. Thus, for these consumers, the association between value consciousness and purchase of store brands will be weak, if any.

On the contrary, for highly value-conscious consumers with low prestige sensitivity, the prominence and status attached to the high price is less important. Therefore, for these consumers, the association between value consciousness and purchase of store

brands should be strong. The above contention leads to the following hypothesis,

H3: The relationship between value consciousness and purchase of store brands is stronger for low prestige sensitivity consumers than for high prestige sensitivity consumers.

Need for Cognition and Purchase of Store Brands

Need for cognition refers to an individual's intrinsic enjoyment of and motivation to engage in effortful cognitive information processing (Cacioppo and Petty 1982). Consumer researchers have long recognized the need for cognition as an important factor in influencing consumers' purchasing behaviors (e.g., Inman, Peter, and Raghurir 1997; Inman, McAlister, and Hoyer 1990). How consumers arrive at a brand-related judgment, such as judgments of quality or value, is affected by need for cognition because of the implications of processing intrinsic (attribute-related) information.

Low need for cognition individuals are more likely to rely on easily processed peripheral cues or other marketplace signals and provide little elaboration on such information to form an attitude. High need for cognition individuals rely more on message content and engage in more elaboration of such information in forming their attitude (e.g., Inman, Peter, and Raghurir 1997; Zhang and Buda 1999). Store brands have limited distribution, engage in less advertising, and typically charge lower prices than national brands. Taken as extrinsic cues or market signals, these characteristics place them at a disadvantage compared to national brands. Extrinsic cue effects were shown to play a more important role in brand evaluations than product ingredients in comparisons between the two brand types (Richardson, Dick, and Jain 1994). These easily processed information cues may signal inferior quality to consumers with low need for cognition. However, consumers with high

need for cognition may pay more attention to information from product labels and engage in more extensive comparisons with national brands. This effort may lead them to more greatly appreciate the quality offered by store brands, and thus deem them good purchase values. Therefore, consumers with high need for cognition should be more likely to consider store brands than those with low need for cognition.

H4: Need for cognition is positively related to purchase of store brands.

Interaction between Value Consciousness and Need for Cognition

H1 proposed that value consciousness is positively related to store brand usage. However, value is a perceived construct and, as argued above, judgments of quality and value—which affect purchase intentions—are influenced by the manner in which these judgments are formed. If consumers form judgments based on extrinsic cues and they are high in value consciousness, they may opt not to buy store brands but instead buy national brands or national brands on deal. On the other hand, if the consumer forms judgments based on elaborated processing of intrinsic attributes and they are highly value conscious, they should be more likely to perceive a better value in store brands. Therefore, it is proposed,

H5: The relationship between value consciousness and purchase of store brands is stronger for high need for cognition consumers than that for low need for cognition consumers.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A survey was designed and undergraduate college students participated in the study for extra credit. In total, 213 useable cases were obtained of which freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors are roughly evenly distributed (19.4%, 20.9%, 34.6%, and 25.1%, respectively). A bit more than half (70.4%) are females and the majority is White (76.7%), followed by Asian (10.0%) and Black (9.5%).

Measures

Value consciousness, prestige sensitivity and need for cognition are independent variables and purchase of store brands is the dependent variable in the study. The measure for value consciousness was taken from Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, and Burton (1990). Subjects were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1=strongly agree to 7=strongly disagree) with seven items such as “I am very concerned about low prices, but I am equally concerned about product quality” and “When I shop, I usually compare the ‘price per ounce’ information for brands I normally buy.” After reverse coding, the score for the scale should range from 7 to 49, with the higher score indicating greater value consciousness. For our sample, the mean score was 38.06 (s.d.=7.05). The Cronbach reliability coefficient alpha was .78, comparable to that in the original study.

The measure for prestige sensitivity was taken from Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer (1993). The scale includes nine items, asking subjects to indicate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1=strongly agree to 7=strongly disagree) with statements such as “Buying a high priced brand makes me feel good about myself” and “Even for a relatively inexpensive product, I think that buying a costly brand is impressive.” After reverse coding, the

score for the scale should range from 7 to 63, with higher scores indicating greater prestige sensitivity. For our sample, the mean score was 29.68 (s.d.=10.39). For this scale Cronbach’s alpha was .86, indicating good reliability.

Need for cognition was measured by Cacioppo, Petty, and Kao’s (1984) abbreviated 18-item scale. Subjects were asked to indicate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1=strongly agree to 7=strongly disagree) with statements such as “I would prefer complex to simple problems” and “I find satisfaction in deliberating hard and for long hours.” After appropriate coding, the scale should range between 18 and 126, with higher scores on the scale reflecting greater need for cognition. Subjects in this study exhibited a mean score of 80.79 (s.d.=14.81). Cronbach’s alpha was .87, which is consistent with previous studies (e.g., Cacioppo, Petty, and Kao 1984; Inman, Peter, and Raghuram 1997).

For consumers’ purchase of store brands, an index of private label usage was developed. Subjects were asked to report the brand they most often buy or would be most likely to buy next time they purchase the product for 20 grocery goods (see Appendix), pre-tested for relevance to the sample and similar to the ones used in past research (e.g., Richardson, Jain, and Dick 1996). Subjects were instructed to write down “do not use” or “any brand” if applicable. Then, the ratio (expressed in percentage) of the number of store brands over the number of products they use is computed as the index of consumers’ purchase of store brands. Although some past research has used frequency scales (i.e., purchasing the brands “very often” to “not very often”) to indicate store brand usage (e.g., Myers 1967; Richardson, Jain, and Dick 1996), an index was deemed less prone to subjective interpretation. Theoretically, this index could range between 0 and 100; for our sample it ranged between 0 and 75, with a mean of 16.73 (s.d.=15.83).

Analysis

Hypotheses 1, 2 and 4 predict main effects and are tested by multiple regression. Hypotheses 3 and 5 predict moderation effects and are tested according to the method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

RESULTS

Table 1 reports the bivariate correlations between the independent variables and dependent variables.

Hypothesis 1, 2 and 4 predict that the main effects of consumers’ value consciousness, prestige sensitivity, and need for cognition on their purchase of store brands. Although the Pearson correlations between value consciousness and prestige sensitivity and that between value consciousness and need for cognition are significant, the coefficients are fairly small (see Table 1). Hence, it is deemed that multicollinearity will not be a severe problem if the three variables are entered simultaneously to a regression. As expected, the collinearity tolerance for all three variables is very high ($\geq .94$, see Table 2).

The multiple regression show significant results, with $R^2=.09$, $F(3, 202)=6.90$ ($p<.001$). Coefficients are significant for value consciousness and prestige sensitivity ($p=.05$, and $.00$, respectively), but not for need for cognition ($p=.09$). Thus, H1 and H2 are supported but H4 is not.

Hypothesis 3 and 5 predict the moderating effect of prestige sensitivity and need for cognition on the relationship between value consciousness and purchase of store brands. Following Baron and Kenny’s (1986) suggestion, the moderators are first dichotomized at the median point. Then, the effect of value consciousness on purchase of store brands is measured at each level of the moderators. Results are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 1
Correlations, Means, Standard Deviation, and Reliability

	Value Consciousness	Prestige Sensitivity	Need for Cognition	Purchase of Store Brands Index
Value Consciousness	1.00			
Prestige Sensitivity	-.19**	1.00		
Need for Cognition	.16*	-.06	1.00	
Purchase of Store Brands Index	.18**	-.25**	.15**	1.00
Means	38.06	29.68	80.79	16.73
S.D.	7.05	10.39	14.81	15.83
Reliability (Alpha)	.78	.86	.87	—

Note: **-p<.01 (2-tailed)
*-p<.05 (2-tailed)

TABLE 2
Effects of Value Consciousness, Prestige Sensitivity, and Need for Cognition on
Consumers' Purchase of Store Brands

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable Purchase of Store Brand Index				Collinearity Tolerance
	Unstandardized Beta	Std. Error	t	p-value	
(Constant)	4.28	8.83	.49	.63	
Value Consciousness	.31	.16	1.98	.05	.94
Prestige Sensitivity	-.32	.11	-2.99	.00	.96
Need for Cognition	.13	.07	1.72	.09	.98

Note. -R²=.09, F (3, 202)=6.90 (p<.001).

TABLE 3
Moderating Effects of Prestige Sensitivity and Need for Cognition

Moderator	Level of Moderator	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable Purchase of Store Brand Index				Comparison of Betas
			Unstandardized Beta	Std. Error	t	p-value	
Prestige Sensitivity	Low (n=110)	(Constant)	-1.14	9.47	-.12	.91	<i>t</i> =10.71***
		Value Consciousness	.53	.24	2.25	.03	
Need for Cognition	High (n=102)	(Constant)	5.90	7.19	.82	.41	<i>t</i> =-7.53***
		Value Consciousness	.21	.19	1.07	.29	
	Low (n=105)	(Constant)	4.09	8.59	.48	.64	<i>t</i> =-7.53***
		Value Consciousness	.29	.23	1.28	.20	
	High (n=103)	(Constant)	-1.99	8.45	-.24	.82	
		Value Consciousness	.52	.21	2.45	.02	

Note: ***-p<.001

For prestige sensitivity, the upper group exhibits a mean of 38.72 (s.d.=4.92, n=102) and the lower group has a mean of 21.31 (s.d.=6.30, n=110). The impact of value consciousness is significant for consumers with low prestige sensitivity ($t=2.25$, $p=.03$) but not for those with high prestige sensitivity ($t=1.07$, $p=.29$). The difference between the unstandardized coefficients is significant ($t=10.71$, $p<.001$). Therefore, H3 is supported.

For need for cognition, the upper group exhibits a mean of 92.21 (s.d.=9.31, n=103) and the lower group has a mean of 69.58 (s.d.=9.77, n=105). The impact of value consciousness is significant for consumers with high need for cognition ($t=2.45$, $p=.02$) but not for those with low need for cognition ($t=1.28$, $p=.20$). The difference between the unstandardized coefficients is significant ($t=-7.53$, $p<.001$), supporting H5.

DISCUSSION

This study attempts to shed light on the relationship between value consciousness and store brand usage. Consistent with past research (Burton et al. 1998; Deveny 1993), this study shows value consciousness to be positively related to using private labels (H1). The value consciousness measure developed by Lichtenstein et al. and used here captures the degree to which consumers are concerned for value and the level of effort they devote toward value-seeking behavior, such as side-by-side price and quality comparisons. Naturally, then, with this added effort, consumers can make quality and value judgments less biased by extrinsic cue effects, as they might otherwise (e.g., Hoyer and Brown 1990; Richardson, Dick, and Jain 1994).

However, we further demonstrate that all value-conscious consumers are not equally attracted to store brands. As a matter of fact, those with high prestige sensitivity and those with low need for cognition are not attracted to store brands at all (see Table 3). For the former, it is probably because store brands do not provide a feeling of prestige, although it may exhibit good value. For the latter, it is probably because they do not evaluate store brands in great detail thus do not appreciate or recognize the value such brands provide. Examining the value consciousness scale reveals that it is comprised of both behavioral items (e.g., related to use of unit price information) and attitudinal items (e.g., related to how consumers appreciate getting low priced but adequate quality goods). Future research might explore the value consciousness concept in more detail, perhaps by separating components related to effort-involving behavior from components related to preferences for perceived value. In sum it seems that consumers who are value conscious but also pay little attention to product prestige or enjoy effortful cognitive information processing play the leading roles in purchasing store brands (H3 and H5).

This finding provides good implications for retailers who carry store brands and manufacturers who produce name brands. Manufacturers have been concerned that retailers are competing with them for value-conscious consumers via store brands. However, a combination of store brand and national brand users can be beneficial to retailers (Corstjens and Lal 2000), necessitating those who develop store brands to find ways to attract more consumers to their own brands but not disenfranchise national brands or their consumers. A recent study suggests that this is possible if manufacturers and retailers carefully segment the market and target appropriate segments (Ailawadi, Neslin, and Gedenk 2001). The results of our study reinforce this suggestion.

The hypothesis regarding the main effect of need for cognition on purchase of store brands (H4) is not supported. One reason we suspect behind this failed finding may be the use of college students as subjects. On average, college students are higher in need for

cognition than general consumers. In the current study, subjects' need for cognition score ranges from 42 to 126 with the mean of 80.79 (s.d.=14.81). And most (71.15%) are located within the range of one s.d. to the mean. Apparently, they are skewed toward the high end and are restricted around the mean. This range restriction may have reduced the testing power of H4. Therefore, future research is called to retest the relationship with a more general set of consumers.

Past research seems to reveal a general pattern regarding store brand consumption, related to two main factors. First, store brands seem to benefit from a higher level of consumer information processing. Thus, factors related to consumers' ability and motivation to process brand-relevant information should be considered topics for research. Second, store brands seem to suffer a disadvantage compared to national brands on the basis of value expressive benefits offered. Thus, factors related to a consumer's social and self-image should be investigated in the context of the store brand versus national brand choice.

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Kids, Causes, and Culture: Expansion of Commodities and Consumers In the 1990s

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SUMMARY

The papers in this panel explored three distinct arenas of social life that have encountered new and intensive forms of marketization in the 1990s. Daniel Thomas Cook investigated the new and contradictory notions of the “child consumer” that have come to occupy an increasingly central place in marketing discourse and practice. Cook detailed the schizoid character of the new child consumer through an analysis of market research reports and trade literature of several children’s industries. He discussed how the discursive transformation of children’s consumer identity made the boom in the kids’ market morally palatable and thus economically viable.

Inger Stole examined the proliferation of cause-related marketing, questioning whether the altruism behind such efforts is helped or hindered when subordinated to the ultimate goal of branding. Teasing out the differing public relations functions behind cause-related efforts, in particular that of American Express, Stole argued that this new marketing initiative serves to displace other, more effective and direct forms of philanthropy. Blurring the boundaries between consumption and charity may reinforce the corporate sponsor’s image at the expense of the groups in need of help.

Douglas Holt and David Crockett focused in the commodification of poor black urban neighborhoods, euphemistically termed “urban culture.” They delineated the idea of “strategic racialization” as the use of race to reference potent cultural sites used to add brand value. Pinpointing the rise of this phenomenon to late 1980s, Holt and Crockett gave a close reading of the racialized branding in Mountain Dew television commercials. The authors noted the particular challenges facing marketers in articulating racialized value to such brands in a credible manner.

Panel discussion leader, Linda Scott, noted how all the papers took what seemed to be unconnected associations, images and practices and turned them on their head exposing unseen dimensions of ideology and meaning. She also remarked on the highly contextual nature of these investigations, calling for more research and thinking which makes use of social and political context in the investigation of consumption and consumer behavior.

“The Gift that Keeps on Giving: Cause-Related Marketing in the 1990s”

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By most accounts, the coveted prize as “innovator” of cause-related marketing (CRM) goes to American Express. In 1983, the credit card company launched its frequently cited campaign to help restore the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. The company promised to contribute 1 cent for every card transaction and \$1 for every new card issued during the last quarter of 1983 to the cause. While the restoration effort, which collected \$1.7 million, was the immediate beneficiary, the 28 percent increase in use of American Express cards showed the financial institution to benefit as well (Andreasen, 1996; Weeden, 1996). The newly minted strategy was not lost on others, and by the early 1990s U.S. businesses were plunging into cause-related marketing on a grand scale. Between 1990 and 1998 the amount spent on such efforts rose from \$125 million to over half a billion dollars annually (Bishoff, 2000/2001). By 1999, American businesses were spending \$630 million on cause-related marketing (“Good deeds,” 1999).

What, exactly, is cause-related marketing? How did it develop and how does it differ from previous forms of corporate philanthropy? Who benefits from cause-related marketing? What are some of its advantages and what are some of its problems or shortcomings? Drawing on secondary literature, the study utilizes historical, economic and sociological frameworks to answer these questions. It traces the roots of cause-related marketing to the rise of corporate public relations in the early 20th century (Marchand, 1987; Marchand, 1998; Ewen 1996) and teases out similarities between early forms of public relations, which rose in response to a corporate need to connect with publics beyond the mere point of purchases and service, and cause-related marketing of today. Having established a historical context for cause-related marketing, the study positions the phenomenon within the larger framework of what is commonly referred to as “strategic philanthropy” and explore how cause related marketing distinguish itself from its other forms. It also provide an overview of the techniques and strategies most commonly used in cause-related marketing campaigns.

Departing from recent studies concerning the effect of cause-related marketing on company sales and image (Barone, Miyazaki and Taylor, 2000; Till and Nowak, 2000; Bronn and Vroni, 2001; Welsh, 1999, Webb and Mohr, 1998; Mizerski, Mizerski and Sadler, 2001), the study explores the broader, and more political ramifications, behind this marketing strategy. While cause-related marketing, at least at first glance, appear to be a perfect solution for financially strapped non-profit groups and large corporations alike, it also raises some important questions. What, for example, are the criteria used by business to determine issues that warrant cause-related attention? Do some social causes lend themselves more easily to cause-related marketing ventures than others? And what are some of the larger ramifications of trying to solve social problems through acts of consumption (Andreasen, 1996; Andreasen, 2001; Hutton, 2001; King, 2001; Polonsky and Wood, 2001; Pringle and Thompson, 2001; Peeples, 2002)?

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"Contradictions and Conundrums of the Child Consumer: The Emergent Centrality of an Enigma in the 1990s"

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The child consumer today appears as a contested figure on the public landscape of consumption. It stands both for corporate exploitation and individual autonomy. It's appetite for apparently all things commercial has been seen, on one hand, as evidence of over-indulgence on the part of parents and relatives and, on the other, as the child's active partaking in the deserved pleasures of childhood (and, to a less explicit degree, of consumer capitalism).

Since the late 1980s, the children's market has exploded. James McNeal (1999) estimated that children's direct and indirect (i.e., influence) purchases tripled during the 1990s accounting for perhaps \$30 billion in annual sales toward the end of the decade in the US alone. During this time, market forces have made inroads into children's lives new ways. With the advent of school-based television network, Channel One, now in use in about 12,000 classrooms, many children experience commercials as a routine and unremarkable part of their daily lessons. In the 1990s, new licensing agreements, tie-in promotions and cross-branding of

merchandise made logos and media characters ubiquitous and have worked to interweave previously disparate products—from fast food to film, from clothing to television shows, from action figures to greeting cards—into a single promotional mix. In addition, new child-targeted media like cable stations and the internet together with special sections of newspapers, new magazines, radio programs and stations have combined to increasingly delineate, and thereby deliver, "children" as a market.

Monetary measures and commercial innovation offer only a surface glimpse at deeper developments in the kids' market generally, and in social understanding of "the child" more specifically. Underlying and supporting the growth in the children's market has been an ongoing transformation of a quite fundamental kind—a transformation in the conceptualization of the kind of being a "child" is, particularly as an economic actor, i.e., as a consumer.

Beginning in the 1970s, consumer socialization emerged as the dominant paradigm to understanding the changing contours of children's involvement in the market sphere over the early life course (John 1999). Consistent with an "ages and stages" template of growth, most consumer socialization research assumes an essentially linear trajectory of child development from less to more knowledgeable, from simple to complex information processors, from unskilled to skilled consumers (see Gunther and Furnham 1998). Since the 1980s, the working model of the "child consumer" informing marketing and advertising *practice* (but not necessarily the academic research) has gradually discarded a developmental or socialization approach—but not completely—in favor of treating and portraying children as "independent" consumers.

Most generally, the view of "the child" has been moving in the direction of seeing children as increasingly complete beings unto themselves, with pre-existent desires for goods and, importantly, with the socially adjudicated right and wherewithal to request, demand and/or purchase these goods. In short, "the child" has been emergent as more or less a full person, in the social sense, particularly in the realm of consumption (see Cook 2000).

The view of "the child" as autonomous consumer-person is not limited to market perspectives and discourse as evidenced, for instance, by the increasing role children play in family purchasing decisions. Children's personhood status also cannot be divorced from their ever-intensifying role and posture as consumers. Yet, children's identity as consumers is fraught with controversies and conundrums.

There has arisen a schizoid image of the child consumer. One the one hand, there is the view of the child as a purposeful economic actor who exhibits competence in information processing and consumer choice. This "child" is favored by those invested in selling to children and parents. Prior to the mid-'80s, this view took the form of the "sophisticated" or "savvy" child who was portrayed in advertisements and discussed in the trades as a knowing consumer who makes informed choices about goods. By the 1990s, this view began to mutate into a discourse of child "empowerment" whereby "the child"—knowing or not, sophisticated or not—would gain social power through gaining access to specially-designed goods and entertainment. The implication behind this construction was that to deny the child goods was tantamount to disempowering her or him.

This new "child" has clashed with another set of dominant images—those of innocent, vulnerable children—who are subject to all sorts of dangers from the marketplace and beyond. Social critics and watchdog groups like Action for Children's Television have made their presence felt in the political arena surrounding children and consumption. From this perspective, the tactics used by marketers—such as the media tie-ins, cross-branding and the

active cultivation of “pester power” by some—amounts to the exploitation of *unknowing* or less than competent consumers.

Drawing upon more than a decade of market research, trade literature and advertising campaigns from a variety of industries focusing on children’s direct and indirect purchasing influence—clothing, toys and food, in particular—this paper offers an interpretive analysis of the recent (1990s+) transformations in the depiction and definition of children as competent, knowledgeable consumers/audience members. In what ways has the transformation of children’s consumer identity made the boom in the kids’ market morally palatable and thus and economically viable?

The discussion offers a perspective which avoids an either/or understanding of the issues and instead focuses on delineating the conceptual conundrums involved in the ongoing battle over which model of the child will govern the place of children in an increasingly marketized world.

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A Preliminary Study on Common Variable Selection Strategy in Data Fusion

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ABSTRACT

Data fusion has been known as a major approach for estimating missing values in large databases. Although selecting common variables is one of the important factors in data fusion, few studies have systematically investigated the various methods available. In this study three strategies are considered for selecting a set of common variables and their results are compared using a Monte Carlo simulation. Selection strategies by variance and by weighted importance perform better than random selection. The results also show that, in locating a donor, the Euclidean distance-based selection outperforms the inter-respondent correlation-based selection. Directions for future research are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Data Fusion

Data fusion (Baker et al. 1989; Kim and Hamano 1995) is one of the major approaches used to estimate the missing values that occur frequently in surveys conducted in social science research. In data fusion, both respondents and questionnaire (question items) are split into two subsets. One subset has missing information, and the other has complete information. The subset of respondents who have missing information is called recipients and their missing information is estimated (replaced) by the complete information available from another set of respondents called donors, who have answered the missing part of the survey questionnaire. This process is called fusion. In addition, the data fusion approach requires all respondents (both donors and recipients) to answer a common set of question items in a survey called common variables.

In data fusion, a donor is typically found for a recipient who has the highest proximity to the recipient. Proximity among respondents is computed on the basis of a set of common variables. Proximity can be defined according to the Euclidean distance among respondents, inter-respondent similarity, inter-respondent correlations, or some other measures. In cases where the common variables are categorical variables in which distances, similarities or correlation coefficients cannot be directly computed, one can use the chi-square metric method from multiple correspondence analyses (Carroll et al. 1986; Hoffman and Franke 1986), which is a special type of multidimensional scaling technique (Kruskal and Wish 1986).

Data fusion is becoming more and more important these days. With the development of information technology and the explosion of customer data, a methodology is needed to reduce the amount of data to be collected. Successful fusion results in the savings of time and cost in data collection, and consequently less time is needed to analyze the data. Data fusion can be applied to many areas including database marketing (DBM; Hughes 1994; Jackson and Wang 1997) and customer relationship management (CRM; Brown 2000).

As is well known, conditional independence is a theoretical assumption of data fusion. In other words, the donor variables and the recipient variables are conditionally independent given the common variables. Jophcott and Bock (1998) claimed that this assumption becomes more realistic in planned media fusion with conditional independence in mind, than it is in unplanned fusion studies.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore the possibility of selecting an optimal set of common variables in the data fusion approach. While data fusion is popular in social science research, to the best of our knowledge, few research have yet been carried out to determine the optimal method to find common variables in data fusion research. In this research, we create missing values by deleting the original values and try to recover them for each individual via data fusion. We adopt three different approaches to select the set of common variables: (1) to select common variables at random, (2) to select those variables with high variances, and (3) to select those variables with high importance weights.

We also adopt two approaches to locate the donors for the purpose of imputing the missing values of the recipients. One approach is to use the inter-respondent correlation coefficients, and the other is to use the inter-respondent Euclidean distances. We manipulate the number of variables with missing information at three levels in our study: (1) one missing variable, (2) two missing variables, and (3) three missing variables.

We try to achieve our research objective by comparing the performance measures, which is the extent to which data fusion recovers the original values of the missing (deleted) variables. The correlation coefficients of the original and the recovered values are taken at an individual level as performance measures of the fusion approach.

The specific research questions include the following:

- (1) How do these three common variable selection strategies perform? What is the impact on the accuracy of the recovered values for each selection strategy?
- (2) How do the two approaches for locating donors perform?
- (3) How much loss occurs in the accuracy of the recovered values by increasing the number of missing variables?

The research objectives are pursued via Monte Carlo simulations of two real world data sets.

METHOD

Data

Two different sets of data from conjoint experiments (Green and Srinivasan 1978; 1990) were used in this study. The first data set deals with the preference (part-worths) for the automobile dealership collected from 700 respondents. The second data set deals with the preference for the credit card service collected from a sample of 480 respondents. The automobile data and credit card service data involve 13 and 12 variables (attributes), respectively. The number of attribute levels for an attribute ranges from two to eight. The attributes of the automobile dealership data include types of vehicles sold (6 attribute levels), outlet location (3 levels), showroom (4 levels), shopping center (3 levels), vehicle financing (3 levels), purchase transaction (3 levels), trade-ins (4 levels), specialized employees (3 levels), new vehicle service (4 levels), availability of loaners and rentals (2 levels), service plans (3 levels), parts (3 levels), and discounts (8 levels). The attributes of the credit card service data include annual fee (6 attribute levels), cash refund

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(3 levels), message delivery (3 levels), purchase item insurance (2 levels), air travel insurance (3 levels), rental car insurance (2 levels), luggage insurance (3 levels), airport lounge/club (3 levels), credit card coverage (4 levels), emergency vehicle (2 levels), limousine service (2 levels), and 24 hour customer assistance (2 levels).

Experimental Design

In this research, we first select a set of common variables and create missing values by deleting one, two, or three non-common variables (attributes) at random. We then recover the missing values by applying the fusion approach and compare the recovered values to the original values at an individual level.

Common Variable Selection Strategies

We selected the set of common variables using three different selection strategies as described below.

- (1) Selection at random: We select a set of common variables at random.
- (2) Selection by variance: We select a set of common variables that have the highest variances.
- (3) Selection by weighted importance: We select a set of common variables that have the highest variable importance weights.

The variance and importance weight of the variables have been adopted because we expect that they produce a higher level of variability among respondents, which might help in the donor locating processes. The variances and the importance weights are important bases in cluster analysis (Howard and Harris 1966; Green and Krieger 1991) and other distance models such as multidimensional scaling. The data fusion approach is also one kind of distance model. In this research, we have fixed the number of common variables at six in all simulation runs.

Donor Location Strategies

We adopt two different strategies for locating donors to estimate (recover) the missing values that have been generated. The first strategy is to use the inter-respondent correlation coefficients. In this strategy, the missing value of an attribute (variable) of recipient i is substituted with the value of that variable of donor j , the donor who has the highest correlation coefficient with recipient i . If the value of the donor with the highest correlation with the recipient is also missing, the respondent with the next highest correlation with the recipient becomes the donor.

The second strategy utilizes the Euclidean distance among respondents. In this strategy, the missing value of an attribute (variable) of recipient i is substituted with the value of that variable of donor j , the donor who has the minimum Euclidean distance to recipient i . If the value of the donor with the minimum distance to the recipient is also missing, we locate the respondent with the second minimum distance to the recipient as the donor.

In both approaches, proximity measures (inter-respondent correlations and inter-respondent distances) were calculated with six common variables for both the automobile dealership data and the credit card service data.

Number of Variables Deleted

After selecting the set of common variables according to the three different strategies described above, we delete one, two, or three variables at random for each respondent.

Therefore, the experimental design for the research can be summarized as follows.

- (1) Common Variable Selection Strategies (3 levels): At Random; By Variance; and By Weight.

- (2) Donor Location Strategies (2 levels): By Correlation and By Euclidean Distance.
- (3) Number of Variables with Missing Values (3 levels): Deleting One Variable; Deleting Two Variables; and Deleting Three Variables.

A 3 X 2 X 3 full factorial design of the three experimental factors produced 18 combinations. For each combination of the factor levels, 20 simulations were carried out. For each simulation, the correlation coefficient was computed between the original and the recovered values for each respondent and the average correlation coefficient was subsequently computed (based on 700 and 480 respondents for the automobile dealership and the credit card service data sets, respectively) and analyzed.

RESULTS

We measured the accuracy of the recovered values of the missing variables compared to the original ones using correlation coefficients. Since we deal with two different data sets, we analyze them separately.

Table 1 shows the results of the analysis of variance for the automobile dealership data. All experimental factors are significant at $p=0.0001$ level, except the donor location strategy ($p=0.1167$). Two out of three interactions are statistically significant. Table 2 shows the means of the experimental factors. As expected, as the number of missing values increases, the performance of the fusion approach decreases. In terms of the common variable selection strategy, selecting by variance performs best while selecting at random produces the poorest result. The two donor location strategies are not statistically significant but finding donors by the inter-respondent Euclidean distance seems to produce slightly better results than finding donors by inter-respondent correlation.

Table 5 shows the results of the analysis of variance for the credit card service data. Results are generally similar to those of the automobile dealership data, but we noticed some differences. First, all experimental factors are significant at $p=0.0001$ level. Second, only one interaction (selection strategy by the number of variables deleted) is statistically significant. One major finding to note is that selecting a set of common variables by importance weight leads to the best performance while selecting at random produces the poorest results again. Finding donors by Euclidean distance leads to better recovery of the missing values with a statistical significance.

DISCUSSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study tries to evaluate the performance (the accuracy of the recovered values) of the strategies for selecting a set of common variables that might be used in the data fusion approach. Considering the exploratory nature of the study, these results seem promising. However, it would be hasty to make a conclusion on the value of the selection strategies we have considered in the current study. Albeit tentatively, however, we can summarize these findings as follows.

- As the number of missing values increases, the performance of the fusion approach decreases for both the automobile dealership data and the credit card service data.
- In terms of the donor location strategy, it seems that using inter-respondent Euclidean distance leads to better results.
- In terms of selecting a set of common variables, selecting at random consistently produces the poorest results in both data sets.
- In terms of the common variable selection strategy, this study produced mixed results. In the automobile dealership data set, selecting a set of common variables by variance

TABLE 1
ANOVA Results for Automobile Dealership Data

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F
Model	13	0.24198958	0.01861458	3671.40	<.0001
Number of Missing Variables	2	0.22611309	0.11305655	22298.4	<.0001
Variable Selection Strategy	2	0.01389377	0.00694689	1370.15	<.0001
Donor Location Strategy	1	0.00001254	0.00001254	2.47	0.1167
Selection Strategy * Location Strategy	2	0.00012070	0.00006035	11.90	<.0001
Missing Values * Location Strategy	2	0.00001392	0.00000696	1.37	0.2548
Missing Values * Selection Strategy	4	0.00183555	0.00045889	90.51	<.0001
Error	346	346	0.00175428	0.000005	
Total	359	359	0.24374385		

TABLE 2
Means of Experimental Factors

Number of Missing Values		Selection Strategy		Location Strategy	
1	0.9678692	At Random	0.9323675	Correlation	0.9368861
2	0.9368675	By Variance	0.9458508		
3	0.9064817	By Weight	0.9330000	Distance	0.9372594

TABLE 3
Cell Means (Location Strategy by Selection Strategy)

Location Strategy	Selection Strategy		
	At Random	By Variance	By Weight
Correlation	0.93298000	0.94511000	0.93256833
Distance	0.93175500	0.94659167	0.93343167

TABLE 4
Cell Means (Selection Strategy by Number of Missing Values)

Selection Strategy	Number of Missing Values		
	1	2	3
At Random	0.96502250	0.93209250	0.89998750
By Variance	0.97258250	0.94598250	0.91898750
By Weight	0.96600250	0.93252750	0.90047000

TABLE 5
ANOVA Results for Credit Card Service Data

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F
Model	13	0.49835	0.03833	3108.91	<.0001
Number of Missing Variables	2	0.33681	0.16841	13657.6	<.0001
Selection Strategy	2	0.14413	0.07207	5844.55	<.0001
Location Strategy	1	0.00142	0.00142	115.13	<.0001
Selection Strategy * Location Strategy	2	0.00007	0.00004	3.00	0.0509
Missing Values * Location Strategy	2	0.00002	0.00001	0.94	0.3932
Missing Values * Selection Strategy	4	0.01589	0.00397	322.15	<.0001
Error	346	0.00427	0.00001		
Total	359	0.50262			

TABLE 6
Means of Experimental Factors

Number of Missing Values		Selection Strategy		Location Strategy	
1	0.96007	At Random	0.89412	Correlation	0.92033
2	0.92173	By Variance	0.93434		
3	0.88515	By Weight	0.93849	Distance	0.92430

TABLE 7
Cell Means (Selection Strategy by Number of Missing Variables)

Selection Strategy	Number of Missing Values		
	1	2	3
At Random	0.94399	0.89215	0.84623
By Variance	0.96642	0.93474	0.90187
By Weight	0.96980	0.93830	0.90737

leads to the best performance, whereas selecting a set of variables by importance weight leads to the best performance for the credit card data set. We do not have explanations for the difference at this point, but we can only attribute this difference to the characteristics of the data sets at hand.

Considering its exploratory nature, the current study has made a valuable contribution to the field of data fusion research. The data fusion approach can be applied to many research areas. For example, as implied by our study with conjoint part-worths data, data fusion can find its value in solving one of the major problems in conjoint analysis. When conjoint experiments involve a large number of attributes and attribute levels, the number of hypothetical product profiles increases multiplicatively. By using the fusion approach one can greatly reduce the number of product profiles each respondent needs to evaluate.

It might be worthwhile to address the limitations of this study. As a way to enhance generalization of our findings, although never be enough, two different kinds of data sets were employed. The consistency of two experimental results reveals a moderate level of external validity. Another limitation of our method to be pointed out is that systematic bias can hardly be controlled in an experiment such as in this study. One might argue that correlation existing between variables was not properly taken care of in our study. It is usual to suspect a correlation existing between some variables selected, e.g., the shopping center variable and the outlet location variable. One possible remedy for this would be for us to adopt the Mahalanobis distance-based locating strategy instead of the Euclidean distance-based in future research.

Before a conclusion on the value of the strategies for the common variable selection can be made, more research is obviously needed in this area. Future research should examine the impact of the number of common variables on the performance of the fusion approach, while we have fixed the number of common variables at six in all simulations. Future research should consider the value of the different types of common variables in the fusion approach. For example, while this study utilized metric variables (conjoint part-worths) as a common variable set, future research should consider the value of categorical variables such as demographic or lifestyle characteristics of the respondents as common variables.

Finally, future research should consider the performance of the pre-planned fusion approach. In the current study, we created and tried to recover the missing values from a complete (non-missing) data set. But future research should utilize the pre-planned fusion where two kinds of data are collected: one with full (no missing) information and the other with partial information (with missing data), then evaluate the worth of data fusion approach.

Research in this area is currently under way in the context of a conjoint experiment, but future research should not be limited to the context of conjoint analysis and instead use general survey data.

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How Mood and Ad-self-congruency Affect the Relative Influence of Hedonic Ad Appeals and Utilitarian Ad Appeals on Product Evaluations

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ABSTRACT

This study argues that participants' affective states determine the relative influence of hedonic ad appeals and utilitarian ad appeals on participants' evaluations of dual function products. Specifically, this study shows that a positive affective state, in comparison to a neutral affective state, increases participants' reliance on their attitudes toward hedonic ad appeals in developing their product evaluations. As a result, ads featuring congruent self-concepts generate more favorable ad and product evaluations when participants are in positive affective states as opposed to in neutral affective states. Moreover, this study demonstrates that the relative influence of hedonic ad appeals and utilitarian ad appeals on brand evaluations is a function of participants' affective states, as well as the congruency of image portrayals in the hedonic ad with participants' self concepts.

The two most dominant types of advertising appeals are believed to be the hedonic (value-expressive or image) appeal and the utilitarian (functional) appeal (Johar & Sirgy, 1991; Snyder & DeBono, 1985). However, past literature does not provide sufficient information regarding how different contextual factors may affect the influences of different ad appeals on brand evaluations. What is better known is that, for a product that provides mainly hedonic satisfaction, a hedonic ad appeal is more persuasive, whereas for a product that is primarily evaluated on the basis of its functional attributes, a utilitarian ad appeal is more effective (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Unfortunately, there has been a notable lack of attention paid to the question of which type of ad appeal is more effective for a dual-function product, one that offers hedonic satisfaction in addition to fulfilling utilitarian functions. This study, therefore, will specifically explore the influence of hedonic ad appeals and utilitarian ad appeals in different contexts for a dual-function product.

Adaval (2001) has proposed that participants' affective states may either confirm or disconfirm their responses to product-related information, thereby altering the weight of the piece of information that is being taken into account, a phenomenon known as the affect-confirmation effect. According to Adaval's theorization, happy individuals may allocate more weight to favorable information than to unfavorable information when they make judgments, because the valence of the former is congruent with the individuals' affective states and the valence of the latter is incongruent with their affective states. As Adaval's affect-confirmation effect theory suggests, the argument that affective states encourage heavier weighting of hedonic product attributes will only hold true if the hedonic ad information generates favorable evaluations which are similar in valence to the participants' affective states. It is important to note that literature examining the effectiveness of hedonic ad appeals from the self-congruency perspective has clearly suggested that the effectiveness of an ad appealing to user image is a function of the way participants perceive themselves on the same image dimension. To the extent that participants' self-concepts are congruent with image portrayals in a hedonic ad, consumers will generate more positive affective responses. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that, under the condition in which positive affective states are induced, positive affective responses evoked by self-congruent ad messages will encourage affect-confirmation and bias participants' evaluation of ads and brands positively.

Adaval (2001) has further demonstrated that affect-confirmation effects occur only when consumers base their product evaluations on hedonic criteria, (criteria that pertain to affective responses), not when they develop their product evaluations based on utilitarian criteria, (criteria that mainly concern product performance and are not directly linked to affective consequences). This study carries Adaval's theory one step further by arguing that when both utilitarian and hedonic product information is available for a dual-function product, a product that can be judged either on the basis of its hedonic qualities or its utilitarian functions, participants' positive affective states can increase the relevancy of hedonic product information and thus alter the weight participants assign to hedonic messages when they evaluate the product. In addition, this study proposes, that the relative importance of hedonic ad appeals and utilitarian ad appeals in rendering judgmental influence on product evaluations also hinges on the congruency of the portrayed images with participants' self-concepts. Yet, when the portrayed image is incongruent with participants' self-concepts, participants are motivated to elaborate on messages. Therefore, their product beliefs and their evaluations of the utilitarian ad become important judgmental inputs for brand evaluations.

HEDONIC VS. UTILITARIAN AD APPEALS

Advertising appeals can generally be categorized as either hedonic (image or value-expressive) appeals or utilitarian (functional) appeals (Johar & Sirgy, 1991; Snyder & DeBono, 1985). The hedonic ad appeal involves building a personality for the product, from which consumers may project images, such as the values and lifestyles of product users (Johar & Sirgy 1991; Snyder & DeBono 1985). In clear contrast, the utilitarian ad appeal explicitly addresses product attributes or focuses on product quality claims (Johar & Sirgy, 1991; Snyder & DeBono, 1985).

Past literature has indicated that the effectiveness of hedonic and utilitarian ad appeals is moderated by other factors. For example, a product's inherent characteristics determine if it is effective to employ either a hedonic or utilitarian appeal. A match between product characteristics and ad appeal has been shown to generate more favorable responses (Davis & Lennon, 1989; Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that the effectiveness of hedonic appeals and utilitarian appeals is a function of individual differences, such as participants' genders (Covell, Dion, & Dion, 1994), their levels of self-monitoring (DeBono & Packer, 1991; Snyder & DeBono, 1985) and their levels of control orientations (Zuckerman, Gioioso & Tellini, 1988). In a similar vein, this study argues that the effectiveness of hedonic appeals and utilitarian appeals is determined by participants' affective states.

AFFECT CONFIRMATION EFFECTS

Past research has shown that mood has a direct influence on product judgments in that a positive affective state will generate more favorable product evaluations than a negative or neutral affective state (Gorn, Goldberg & Basu, 1993; Pham, 1998). It has also been suggested that mood can render an indirect impact on product judgments through its influence on the relative weight allocated to specific information (Adaval, 2001). Adaval proposes an affect-confirmation process to argue that, individuals' affective states may either confirm or disconfirm their responses to a piece of product-related information, thereby altering the weight that the

piece of information is allocated. In Adaval's theorization, individuals are sometimes confused as to the sources of their affective states and, therefore, when the valence of their affective states and their perceptions of product information is similar, they will be more confident that their perceptions of the product information are correct and will then increase the weight of this information in their product judgments.

MOOD AND THE RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF HEDONIC AND UTILITARIAN APPEALS

Adaval (2001) has reasoned that affect-confirmation effects are mainly limited to judgments that are based on affect. Drawing upon the distinctions between the two general types of product criteria, hedonic and utilitarian, Adaval has argued that evaluating products on the basis of hedonic criteria involves more affective responses, whereas evaluating products on the basis of utilitarian criteria concerns the products' ability to perform and does not pertain to affective responses. Therefore, affect-confirmation effects are more likely to emerge in the former context than in the latter. Indeed, Adaval's study has demonstrated that affect-confirmation effects occur only when consumers develop their product evaluations based on hedonic criteria, not when consumers base their product evaluations on utilitarian criteria.

Similarly, a hedonic ad appeal is characterized by its focus on promoting attractive user portrayals, thus it mainly appeals to affective responses. Utilitarian ad appeals, on the other hand, emphasize specific product attributes and do not pertain to any affective reactions directly. Extending Adaval's (2001) argument, it is reasonable to propose that, in an ad-viewing context in which a consumer may be exposed to both hedonic and utilitarian ad appeals for the same dual-function product, the relative importance of the different appeals in determining brand evaluations will be a function of participants' affective states. In positive affective states, hedonic ad messages may be more relevant and, therefore, the relative importance of hedonic ad messages to utilitarian ad messages on brand evaluations may be enhanced, whereas in neutral affective states, participants' responses to hedonic ad messages and utilitarian ad messages should both equally be taken into account in determining brand evaluations.

However, it is important to note that hedonic ad appeals, aimed at evoking positive affective states, sometimes may not produce the expected positive emotional responses. The hedonic ad appeal has been closely associated with the research tradition that explores the interaction between self-concepts and ad portrayals (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). Most importantly, this line of literature suggests that the effectiveness of hedonic ad messages is a function of the congruency between individuals' self-concepts and portrayed product images. To the extent that ad-portrayed product images are congruent with their self-concepts, individuals will generate more positive responses (Chang, 2000). Therefore, the assumed valence congruency between positive affective states and hedonic ad appeals, the underlying driving force of Adaval's (2001) affect-confirmation process, may not exist when hedonic appeals depict product users that are incongruent with the images that participants project for themselves.

HEDONIC AD APPEALS AND SELF-CONGRUENCY EFFECTS

The underlying assumption of self-congruency research in consumer behavior lies in the symbolic functions of consumption. This line of research suggests that consumers maintain or enhance their self-images through product consumption (Sentis & Markus, 1986). Possessing self-congruent products serves as a way to

complete the self-enhancement functions of consumption. As a result, products that appeal to self-congruent images are favored to products with self-incongruent images (Sirgy, 1982). Moreover, advertising that portrays self-congruent images is also rated more positively than advertising that depicts self-incongruent images (Hong & Zinkhan, 1995). Specifically, it has been established that self-congruent ad messages generate more positive affective responses and higher levels of self-referencing, thereby enhancing ad and brand evaluations (Chang, 2000).

When different dimensions of self-concepts are explored, evidence converges toward the same conclusion suggesting the superiority of ads that depict self-congruent image portrayals to ads that portray self-incongruent portrayals. For example, Jaffe (1994) has indicated that feminine participants and masculine participants respond in divergent ways to ads with different positioning strategies, with a masculine positioning strategy appealing more effectively to masculine participants and a feminine positioning strategy appealing more effectively to feminine participants. Similarly, Chang (2000) has demonstrated that feminine participants generate more positive emotional responses to ads depicting feminine users than to those with masculine users. Additionally, supportive findings regarding ad-self-congruency effects have been documented regarding personality differences (Hong & Zinkhan, 1995) and values (Leach & Liu, 1998; Wang & Mowen, 1997).

The reviewed evidence suggests that hedonic appeals depicting product users with different profiles may not always lead to positive affective states unless the portrayals are consistent with individuals' self-images. Additionally, it is important to note that recent research has posited that the interaction between self-concepts and ad portrayals depicted in hedonic ads may hinge on other factors. Interestingly, individuals' affective states are factors that have been shown to moderate the influence of the interaction between self-concepts and ad messages on individuals' evaluations of the advertised brands.

MOOD AND SELF-CONGRUENCY EFFECTS

As reviewed earlier, an individual's positive affective state can enhance his/her reliance on hedonic ad messages, when the affect-confirmation effect occurs. Similarly, in self-congruency literature, Chang (2002) has demonstrated that participants' affective states moderate the influence of ad and self-concept congruency. When participants are in positive affective states, participants respond to ad messages in a selective way, with self-congruent messages generating more favorable ad evaluations and brand attitudes. Conversely, when participants are in negative affective states, the interaction effect between self-images and ad portrayals does not emerge. Chang argues that when participants are in positive affective states, they are less motivated to process information in analytical ways. Due to a lack of motivation, they engage in peripheral route processing and rely on ad-self-congruency as a cue for developing their brand evaluations. But, when participants are in negative affective states, they are motivated to process information in detail and to elaborate on ad messages to a greater degree, which reduces the influence of ad-self-congruency.

Findings in the past literature seem to reach the same conclusion: Affective states can determine the degree to which participants rely on ad-self-congruency information, information that appeals to hedonic values and involves affective responses. When participants are happy, they are more likely to rely on hedonic ad messages for brand judgments. As a result, whether or not the image portrayals are congruent with their self-images will render judgmental influence on ad and brand evaluations. In addition, it is important to note that Chang's (2002) investigation directly com-

compares participants' responses in positive affective states to those in negative affective states. Given that ad viewers, when not provoked by program context, editorial content, or preceding ads, may likely be in neutral affective states, it is important to directly include neutral affective states in the investigation. In partial replication of Chang (2002), this study will test whether or not the level of congruency between ad portrayals and self-concepts affects product evaluations when participants are in positive affective states as opposed to neutral affective states.

H1: When participants are in positive affective states, the interaction between ad appeals and self-concepts will significantly determine their attitudes toward the hedonic ad. In contrast, when participants are in neutral affective states, the interaction between ad appeals and self-concepts will not affect their attitudes toward the hedonic ad.

H2: When participants are in positive affective states, the interaction between ad appeals and self-images will significantly determine their product evaluations. In contrast, when participants are in neutral affective states, the interaction between ad appeals and self-images will not affect their brand evaluations.

MOOD, SELF-CONGRUENCY AND THE RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF HEDONIC ADS AND UTILITARIAN ADS

This study proposes that when participants are in positive affective states, they are more likely to rely on their ad attitudes toward hedonic ads than their ad attitudes toward utilitarian ads to develop their brand evaluations. Moreover, as reviewed earlier, self-congruency literature argues that hedonic ad appeals may not generate more favorable affective responses unless featured user portrayals are congruent with individuals' self-concepts. Therefore, when participants are in a positive affective state where user portrayals are congruent with self-concepts, affect confirmation may occur and participants will feel confident about their affective responses. As a result, participants' attitude toward hedonic ads may be diagnostic for brand judgments making them more likely to exert dominating influence on brand evaluations. They are thus less likely to take their product beliefs or attitudes toward the utilitarian ad into account.

H3: When participants are in positive affective states and ad portrayals are congruent with their self-concepts, participants' attitudes toward the hedonic ad will significantly determine their brand evaluations, but their attitudes toward the utilitarian ad will not significantly affect their brand evaluations.

In clear contrast, message incongruency has been shown to increase participants' motivation to process messages and thus override the lack of motivation invoked by positive affective states (Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991). For example, within the heuristic-systematic model, Maheswaran and Chaiken have indicated that product incongruent information encourages systematic processing among participants, who are not otherwise motivated to do so. Building upon the same framework as Maheswaran and Chaiken, Jain and Maheswaran (2000) have further demonstrated that inconsistent information is processed more systematically in comparison to consistent information. Therefore, this study proposes that incongruency will motivate happy participants to process information. As a result, even when participants' positive affective states

encourage their reliance on their hedonic attitudes as judgmental inputs, they may still be motivated to take their product beliefs, as well as their attitudes toward utilitarian ads, into account when evaluating the advertised products.

H4: When participants are in positive affective states and ad portrayals are incongruent with their self-concepts, participants' brand evaluations will be determined by their attitudes toward the hedonic ad and the utilitarian ad, as well as their product beliefs generated from ad exposure.

Conversely, when participants are in neutral affective states, bias toward hedonic ad attitudes as judgmental inputs may not occur. Therefore, participants will only take their attitudes toward hedonic ad messages into account when the portrayed images are congruent with participants' self-concepts. In addition, participants in neutral affective states, whose motivation to elaborate on messages is not reduced by their affective states as are happy participants' (Schwarz, 1990; Schwarz & Bless, 1991), will be able to elaborate on messages in both hedonic and utilitarian ads. Therefore, participants' product beliefs, as well as their attitudes toward hedonic ads and utilitarian ads, will together affect their evaluations of advertised brands.

H5: When participants are in neutral affective states and ad portrayals are congruent with their self-images, participants' brand evaluations will be determined by their attitudes toward both the hedonic ad and the utilitarian ad, as well as their product beliefs.

On the contrary, when hedonic ads portray images that are incongruent with participants' self-concepts, they may not provide additional diagnostic information for participants' brand evaluations and, therefore, participants' attitudes toward hedonic ads will not generate significant influence on their brand evaluations. Rather, participants' brand evaluations will be formed mainly on the basis of their product beliefs and their attitudes toward utilitarian ads, which provide relatively more diagnostic information for their brand evaluations.

H6: When participants are in neutral affective states and ad portrayals are incongruent with their self-concepts, participants' brand evaluations will be determined by their product beliefs and their attitudes toward the utilitarian ad.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study was a two-factor experimental design. The two manipulated factors were: ad difference (two ad user profiles: feminine vs. non-feminine) and affective states (two levels: positive vs. neutral). In addition, participants were further categorized into high feminine groups and low feminine groups. Given that self-concepts are multi-dimensional (Markus & Wurf, 1987), this study will explicitly focus on one dimension of self-concept, namely, femininity.

Product Selection

As noted earlier, a product can serve hedonic functions or utilitarian functions (Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Mano & Oliver, 1993). This study will only focus on products that can provide both hedonic and utilitarian satisfaction for consumers. A pretest ($N=20$)

was conducted to select a product that college students were likely to purchase, and also could be evaluated both on hedonic and utilitarian criteria. As a result of the pretest, sneakers were chosen to be the product.

In addition, participants in the study were asked the degree to which they agreed with two pairs of two statements describing their sneaker purchase behaviors. The first two items were designed to measure the hedonic element of the product: "When purchasing sneakers, I will select those that fit my image" and "when purchasing sneakers, I will select those that my friends will feel jealous of." The two items were significantly correlated, Pearson's $R=.40$, $p=.01$, and, therefore, were summed and averaged to represent the hedonic element. The other two items were designed to capture the utilitarian element of the product: "When purchasing sneakers, I will consider product quality" and "when purchasing sneakers, I will take product functions into account." These two items were also significantly correlated, Pearson's $R=.55$, $p=.01$, and, consequently summed and averaged to represent the utilitarian element. A t test indicated that, as expected, the hedonic functions and utilitarian functions of sneakers did not differ in importance, $t(165)=1.03$, $p=.31$, $M_{\text{hedonic}}=5.27$, $M_{\text{utilitarian}}=5.39$.

Stimuli

Professionals working at Ogilvy & Mather Ad Agency in Taipei created stimuli ads. Utilitarian ads contained specific product attribute information, such as weight, breathability and fit. Visuals and layouts were similar for ads with different user portrayals. All ads used in this study were pre-tested to ensure that message manipulations would be successful. To improve external validity, the ads were inserted between real filler ads. Moreover, a fictitious brand was used to reduce any possible confounding influence of brand familiarity.

Participants

One hundred and sixty-seven participants were recruited from the campus of a college in a metropolitan area of Taiwan. Forty-nine percent of the participants were male. All of the scales used in the study were translated into Chinese following Brislin's (1987) translation and translation-back procedure.

Procedures

At the beginning of the experiment, participants assigned to the positive affective state condition were told that the study session was composed of three parts. Participants were informed that the first part was a pretest for the researcher's next project, which would explore the effectiveness of television commercials. In order to create the scripts for these commercials for use in the future study, the participants were asked to provide the researcher with stories of happy life events they had experienced.

The second part of the study started with participants' ratings of their affective states. Then the second coordinator told them that this part of the study was designed to examine the effects of various ad formats or techniques on viewers' information processing, a false story designed to camouflage the purposes of the study from the participants. Next, participants read a filler ad followed by two stimuli ads for the same product, one using hedonic ad appeal and the other employing utilitarian ad appeal. Finally, participants read another filler ad. The order of the two ads was rotated. Given that the order of ad presentation did not have any significant effect on how participants evaluated the hedonic ad, $F(1, 166)=.29$, $p=.59$, the utilitarian ad, $F(1, 166)=.33$, $p=.57$, or the brand, $F(1, 166)=1.19$, $p=.28$, responses from the two sequences were collapsed. After reading the ads, participants provided their cognitive responses and

rated their perceptions of the user images in the ads, after which they rated their ad and product attitudes.

At the beginning of the final part, participants were told that this part of the study was a nation-wide survey designed to explore college students' values and lifestyles in Taiwan. They rated their agreement with select items from Bem's (1974) Sex Role Inventory measuring their femininity, as well as other self-related scales. Participants in the neutral affective state condition were told that the study was composed of two short sessions, instead of three. They started from the second session described for participants in the positive affective state condition. After each group finished the study, the coordinator provided a short debriefing.

Independent Variables

Affective States

Nineteen items were selected from the UWIST mood adjective checklist (Matthews, Jones, & Chamberlain, 1990) to measure participants' affective states. Participants rated their agreement with each item on a 19-item 7-point Likert scale. Factor analyses with varimax rotation generated four factors with eigen-values larger than one. The first factor, with an eigen-value of 6.28, accounted for 19.86% of the variance and was labeled "negative emotions." The second factor, with an eigen-value of 2.46 accounted for 12.95% of the variance and was labeled "positive emotions." The third factor, with an eigen-value of 2.01, accounted for 10.59% of the variance and was labeled "passiveness." The final factor, with an eigen-value of 1.01, accounted for 5.29% of the variance and was labeled "calmness." Cronbach's reliability alphas for negative emotions, positive emotions, and passiveness were satisfactory at .84, .81, and .79 respectively. Additionally, the two items in the calmness scale were significantly correlated, Pearson $R=.67$, $p=.01$. ANOVA indicated that participants in the positive affective state condition had significantly higher ratings on the subscale of positive emotions, $F(1, 165)=6.38$, $p<.01$; $M_{\text{positive}}=4.77$, $M_{\text{neutral}}=4.32$, than did those in the neutral affective state. Moreover, participants in the positive affective state condition generated significantly lower ratings on the subscale of passiveness, $F(1, 165)=4.18$, $p<.04$; $M_{\text{positive}}=3.42$, $M_{\text{neutral}}=3.84$, than did those in the neutral affective state. However, participants in the positive affective state condition and the neutral affective state condition did not differ in their ratings of negative emotions, $F(1, 165)=.17$, $p=.68$, and calmness, $F(1, 165)=.71$, $p=.40$. Therefore, the results of the manipulation checks were satisfactory.

Self-Difference: Self-ratings on Femininity

Participants rated their agreement regarding whether or not the items listed accurately described themselves. The 20 items were selected from Bem's (1974) Sex Role Inventory. Cronbach's reliability alpha for the subscale of femininity was satisfactory at .85.

Ad Difference: Feminine Ads vs. Non-feminine Ads

This study created hedonic ad appeals through the description of users in the ads. Participants were exposed to ads containing messages delineating ad characters with either feminine or non-feminine values. Feminine items in Bem's (1974) Sex Role Inventory were employed as a manipulation check measure. Cronbach's reliability alpha for this subscale was satisfactory at .91. ANOVA indicated that users portrayed in the feminine ad received significantly higher ratings on femininity than did the characters depicted in the non-feminine ad, $F(1, 167)=35.44$, $p<.01$; $M_{\text{feminine}}=4.77$, $M_{\text{non-feminine}}=3.94$. Therefore, the result of the manipulation check was satisfactory.

Ad-self-congruency

Based on the two groups of individual differences and the two groups of ad differences, participants were further categorized into

either the ad-self-congruent group or the ad-self-incongruent group. Specifically, high feminine participants assigned to read feminine ads and low feminine participants assigned to read non-feminine ads were categorized to be ad-self-congruent participants. On the other hand, feminine participants assigned to read non-feminine ads and low feminine participants assigned to read feminine ads were categorized to be ad-self-incongruent participants. In all, 79 participants were categorized in the ad-self-congruent group, with 50% of the participants being male. Eighty-eight participants were categorized in the ad-self-incongruent group, with 47% of the participants being male.

Dependent Measures

Multi-attribute Product Beliefs

A pretest of 20 participants was employed to determine the most important product attributes participants consider when purchasing sneakers. The six top attributes were: "color selection," "durability," "comfort," "style," "weight," and "ease of putting on." Participants in this study were asked to rate how important each of the six attributes was to them when selecting a pair of sneakers. Additionally, they were also asked to rate how likely it was that the advertised product had each of the six attributes. Multi-attribute product beliefs were estimated first by multiplying the importance rating by the likelihood rating for each attribute and then summing the scores of all six attributes.

Ad Attitude toward the Hedonic and the Utilitarian Ad

A 5-item 7-point Likert scale was used to measure participants' attitudes toward the ads. The five items were adopted from Madden, Allen, & Twible (1988). Cronbach's reliability alpha was deemed satisfactory at .91. The same scale was used to measure the utilitarian ad. Cronbach's reliability alpha for ad attitude toward the utilitarian ad was deemed satisfactory at .88.

Brand Attitude

Brand attitudes were measured with a 5-item 7-point Likert scale. The items were adopted from Holbrook and Batra (1987) and Mitchell and Olson (1981). Cronbach's reliability alpha for this scale was deemed satisfactory at .91.

Results and Analyses

To test H1, regression analyses first considered responses of participants in the positive affective state condition. When ad attitudes were regressed upon self-ratings on femininity, ad difference (dummy coded with the feminine ad being -1 and the non-feminine ad being 1), and the interaction between self difference and ad difference, R^2 was estimated at .30, $F(3, 84)=11.36$, $p=.01$. Results showed that only the self-difference by ad difference interaction was significant, $t=3.51$, $p=.01$, $Beta=.52$. In contrast, the impacts of self-difference, $t=.29$, $p=.77$, $Beta=.04$, and ad difference, $t=.15$, $p=.88$, $Beta=.02$, were not significant. When the three variables were regressed on participants' ad attitudes in the neutral affective state condition, R^2 was estimated at .21, $F(3, 80)=6.89$, $p=.01$. As expected, the influence of the self by ad interaction was not significant, $t=.33$, $p=.75$, $Beta=.26$. In addition, the impacts of self-difference, $t=.90$, $p=.37$, $Beta=.42$ and ad difference, $t=.85$, $p=.40$, $Beta=.44$, were not significant, either. Therefore, H1 was supported.

To test H2, regression analyses first considered responses of participants in the positive affective state condition. When brand evaluations were regressed upon self-ratings on femininity, ad difference, and the interaction between self and ad, R^2 was estimated at .31, $F(3, 84)=12.06$, $p=.01$. Results showed that only the influence of the self by ad interaction was significant, $t=2.52$, $p=.01$, $Beta=.37$. In contrast, the influences of self-difference, $t=1.87$, $p=.07$, $Beta=.25$, and ad difference, $t=1.40$, $p=.17$, $Beta=.16$, were

not significant. When the three variables were regressed on participants' brand evaluations in the neutral affective state condition, R^2 was estimated at .20, $F(3, 80)=6.31$, $p=.01$. As expected, the influence of the self by ad interaction was not significant, $t=1.58$, $p=.12$, $Beta=.29$. In addition, the impacts of self-difference, $t=.96$, $p=.34$, $Beta=.17$, and ad difference, $t=.04$, $p=.97$, $Beta=.01$, were not significant, either. H2 was thus supported.

Regression analyses were conducted to test H3. When brand evaluations were regressed upon attitudes toward the hedonic ad, the utilitarian ad, and product beliefs, R^2 was estimated at .45, $F(3, 40)=10.25$, $p=.01$. As expected, only attitude toward the hedonic ad was significant, $t=3.23$, $p=.01$, $Beta=.45$. Participants' attitudes toward the utilitarian ad, $t=1.73$, $p=.09$, $Beta=.22$, and their product beliefs did not exert significant influence on brand evaluations, $t=1.50$, $p=.14$, $Beta=.20$. Therefore, H3 was supported.

Regression analyses were conducted to test H4. When brand evaluations were regressed upon attitudes toward the hedonic ad, the utilitarian ad, and product beliefs, R^2 was estimated at .62, $F(3, 41)=20.85$, $p=.01$. As expected, all three variables had significant influence on brand evaluations (for attitude toward the hedonic ad, $t=3.11$, $p=.01$, $Beta=.32$; for attitude toward the utilitarian ad, $t=4.57$, $p=.01$, $Beta=.51$; for product beliefs, $t=2.51$, $p=.02$, $Beta=.27$). Therefore, hypothesis 4 was supported.

For H5, results indicated that when brand evaluations were regressed upon attitudes toward the hedonic ad, the utilitarian ad, and product beliefs, R^2 was estimated at .82, $F(3, 33)=46.56$, $p=.01$. As expected, all three variables had significant influence on brand evaluations (for attitude toward the hedonic ad, $t=6.70$, $p=.01$, $Beta=.61$; for attitude toward the utilitarian ad, $t=3.15$, $p=.01$, $Beta=.28$; for product beliefs, $t=2.35$, $p=.03$, $Beta=.21$). Therefore, H5 was supported.

For H6, results showed that when brand evaluations were regressed upon attitudes toward the hedonic ad, the utilitarian ad, and product beliefs, R^2 was estimated at .36, $F(3, 43)=7.58$, $p=.01$. As expected, the influence of attitude toward the utilitarian ad was significant, $t=3.15$, $p=.01$, $Beta=.43$, whereas attitude toward the hedonic ad was not significant, $t=1.89$, $p=.07$, $Beta=.27$. However, inconsistent with expectation, the influence of product beliefs was not significant, $t=.59$, $p=.56$, $Beta=.09$. Therefore, in terms of the reduced influence of the hedonic ad, findings were supportive.

DISCUSSION

Findings in this study indicate that positive affective states encouraged participants to evaluate the advertised product on the basis of their attitudes toward the hedonic ad. As a result, whether or not the hedonic ad portrayed images congruent with participants' self-concepts significantly contributed to their evaluations of the ad and the advertised brand. In contrast, when participants were in neutral affective states, ad-self-congruency did not affect their ad and brand evaluations.

Moreover, participants' affective states can bias their brand evaluation process. When participants are in a positive affective state, their attitudes toward the hedonic ad messages are deemed important. Yet, the likelihood that affective states may increase the importance of hedonic product information is implicated by the congruency of portrayed product images in hedonic ads with participants' self-concepts. As a result, when they were in a positive affective state and the portrayed ad images were congruent with their self-concepts, attitudes toward hedonic ads helped determine brand judgments and, therefore, exerted significant influence on brand evaluations. The findings were in line with Adaval's (2001) affect-confirmation effect theory, in that positive affective states confirmed the positive affective responses generated by self-congruent hedonic ad messages and increased the influence of the

hedonic ad on brand evaluations. On the contrary, when happy participants processed self-incongruent ad messages, they were motivated to elaborate on messages and to take their product beliefs, as well as their attitudes toward the utilitarian ads, into account.

When neutral participants processed self-congruent ad messages, as expected, participants' product beliefs, developed from messages in the utilitarian ad, together with their attitudes toward the hedonic ad and the utilitarian ad, influenced their brand evaluations given all the information was relevant for brand judgments. However, inconsistent with expectations, under the self-incongruent condition, neutral participants did not take their product beliefs into account. It is likely that ad messages describing a brand with self-incongruent images might be treated as being less credible, and thus participants were less likely to develop product beliefs based on its ad information.

Findings of this study should be discussed within its limitations. For example, the fact that participants in the neutral mood did not engage in the first phase of the study might introduce unnecessary confounding influences to the findings. Nevertheless, findings of this study still have important implications for marketers. It is common for advertisers to use mixed ad strategies, employing hedonic ad appeals for television commercials and introducing product attributes in print advertisements. Therefore, findings of this study can help marketers develop more effective media planning. For example, when running a hedonic television spot, marketers should consider selecting a humorous or warm-hearted program that can evoke positive affective states, in order to enhance the effectiveness of hedonic ad appeals. Conversely, to help readers focus on product attributes, media planners should select a neutral editorial context for an attribute-focused print ad.

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Content Analysis Research Themes 1977-2000: Evolution and Change

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ABSTRACT

More than two decades ago, Hal Kassirjian introduced the content analysis methodology to consumer researchers in his 1977 *Journal of Consumer Research* article "Content Analysis in Consumer Research." Our research has two goals. First, from a historical perspective, we trace the evolution in the use and application of content analysis in-field from 1977-2000. Second, we analyze the substantive issues and thematic domains that dominate this body of research. By integrating the set of studies in terms of themes, we are in a better position to describe current knowledge and practice, evaluate theoretical progress, identify gaps and weak points that remain, and plot a course for future research.

From its earliest days, content analysis has been a vital and popular technique in the consumer researcher's tool kit. In 1977, Kassirjian's article "Content Analysis in Consumer Research," appeared in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. The article is considered "a catalyst" for later research (Kolbe and Burnett p. 243) and served as a "methodological benchmark" for more than two decades. Just as earlier researchers investigated the *how* of content analysis (methodology), we focus on the *what* (theoretical focus) of such research from 1977-2000.

The purpose is to trace the evolutionary development of research themes so that future content analysts can make sense out of what has been studied and make more informed decisions about what to study in the future. Here, the unit of analysis is the "subject thematic unit," (Riffe, Lacy, and Fico 1998, p. 68), defined by Berelson as "an assertion about a subject matter" (1952, p. 18) and by Holsti as "a single assertion about some subject" (1969, p. 116)—in a word, its "aboutness." The study first examines the "original themes" ("research questions") in Kassirjian's first-generation article, and organizes them into baseline categories. Next, it identifies themes in content analysis studies from 1977-2000, and organizes them into an updated categorical scheme that reveals post-1977 changes. Last, it offers suggestions for new research directions. In this way, thematic development over time is organized into a system that reveals the relationship between changes in content analysis research and changes in society, the advertising and consumer behavior disciplines, the media, and data sources.

Original Themes: Baseline

Historically, content analysis predates the foundation of the field of consumer research. The method was borrowed from other social sciences, and was introduced to the field in 1969 at an AMA Task Force on Marketing Methodology and held at Ohio State University. In a session on "Communication: The Mass Media and Informal Channels," Harold Kassirjian's paper, "The Negro and Mass Media: A Preliminary Analysis of 1969 Magazine Advertisements," demonstrated its use in a study whose theme was the role of blacks in advertisements. His 1977 article formalized the introduction of the method as a valuable new tool for systematic analysis of the content of mass communications, "most useful whenever documentary evidence is available," (Kassirjian 1977, p. 16) and provided a list of themes from past research and directives for the future.

A total of 21 original themes was presented, divided into 12 used in pre-1977 research and 9 suggested for future research. In the pre-1977 summary, the largest number of themes (10) were adver-

tising-related, and of that group, 5 were about images of women and minorities. Five others were about other advertising themes such as social values, product and company images, recruitment for technical/managerial positions, information content, and decision-choice models. The remaining two themes were about other media, including the content of best-selling novels and the readability of marketing and consumer behavior journals. The 9 directives for future themes extended media vehicles to non-advertising communications such as multinational companies' press releases, comic strips, graffiti, bumper stickers, and historical documents recording early consumer behavior. The categorization scheme that we derived to classify the original themes into groups follows:

I. Advertising

- A: Images: women, minorities, product, company
- B: Societal values: social, recruitment
- C: Appeal type: informational content, decision models

II. Other Media

- A: Popular Culture: comic strips, graffiti, bumper stickers
- B: Historical: novels, press releases, documents related to consumer behavior
- C: Disciplinary journals: readability

All of the themes are united by two commonalities: (1) the data source is mass communication messages (marketer-generated), and (2) the collection of themes centers on social issues in the media. That is, content analysis was used to examine public communication about public issues. Under this umbrella, the main categories were differentiated by the media in which the communication appeared—advertising or other media. The original themes of images, values, and appeal types reflected societal changes in the 1960s and early 1970s related to the emergence of the civil rights, women's rights, and consumer rights movements, and the expectation that such changes would continue to be studied. Non-advertising themes in other media were proposed for future study, specifically popular culture media, literature and news, and the disciplinary literature itself, reflecting directives for the development of the new field of consumer research. In the last quarter of the century, a multitude of changes in society and the discipline as well as in the media and data sources calls for reassessment of the original themes to determine where content analysis is now, and where it might go in the future. The current study uses the following method to identify and categorize post-1977 themes.

METHOD

Sample

Articles using content analysis were located in a search of 57 journals indexed in the *Social Sciences Citation Index* (SSCI) "Business" category. Journals included generalist publications such as *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, and *Journal of Marketing Research*, and specialist ones such as *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, *Journal of Retailing*, and *Journal of Advertising*. The criterion for inclusion was citation of Kassirjian's (1977) article, and, after excluding 3 misclassified articles that lacked the criterion citation, we constructed a sample set of 158 articles.

EXHIBIT
Number of Articles in Sample by Business Journal

No. of Articles	Journal
42	Journal of Advertising
19	Journal of Consumer Research
18	Journal of Advertising Research
14	Industrial Marketing Management
14	Journal of Public Policy and Marketing
13	Advances in Consumer Research
12	Journal of Marketing
9	Journal of Marketing Research
7	Journal of Business Research
7	Journal of Consumer Affairs
6	Journal of Retailing
4	Journal of Business Ethics
3	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science
2	Journal of Consumer Policy
2	Journal of Product Innovation Management
2	Psychology & Marketing
2	Services Industries Journal
1	Akron Business and Economic Review
1	International Journal of Research in Marketing
1	Journal of Business
1	Journal of International Business Studies
180	<i>Total</i>

Note: The sample consists of articles in business journals that cite *at least one* of the following: Kassirjian (1977), Hughes and Garrett (1990), or Kolbe and Burnett (1991). Articles citing multiple sources are counted only once.

A subset of articles for a holdout sample was also collected (Miles and Huberman 1994) from “second generation” articles, defined as articles in business journals that did not cite Kassirjian directly, but that did cite two influential methodological articles based on his work: Hughes and Garrett (1990) and/or Kolbe and Burnett (1991). The reason for selecting these two articles is that they are the springboard for the most recent discussions (2001) of reliability assessment by Kent Grayson, Dawn Iacobucci and Roland Rust. After excluding duplicates, the holdout sample contained 22 articles, bringing the total sample to 180 articles.

The final sample contained articles from 21 business journals (see Exhibit), with the highest number in *Journal of Advertising* (42), *Journal of Consumer Research* (19), and *Journal of Advertising Research* (18). The time series graph (Figure 1) shows that the number of articles per year citing Kassirjian (1977) rose steadily from 1977 to 1990, reaching a maximum of 12 articles in 1990. Since then, the number of articles per year has leveled off at about 9 studies per year, underscoring the method’s enduring popularity. The second time series (the holdout sample) in Figure 1 shows that although a few researchers look exclusively to second-generation articles for methodological guidance, the majority continues to recognize Kassirjian’s paper.

Data Analysis and Coding

Analysis began with each author’s identification of article themes in the sample and holdout data sets, and disagreements were resolved by discussion. A provisional coding scheme was derived for the sample article themes via inductive and iterative analysis of the sample data (Noblit and Hare 1988; Miles and Huberman 1994;

Spiggle 1994), and then applied to the holdout article themes to assess their fit in the provisional scheme (Miles and Huberman 1994). No thematic differences between the two sets were found, and after re-analysis of both data sets, the final coding scheme was agreed upon and used to derive categories for all of the articles.

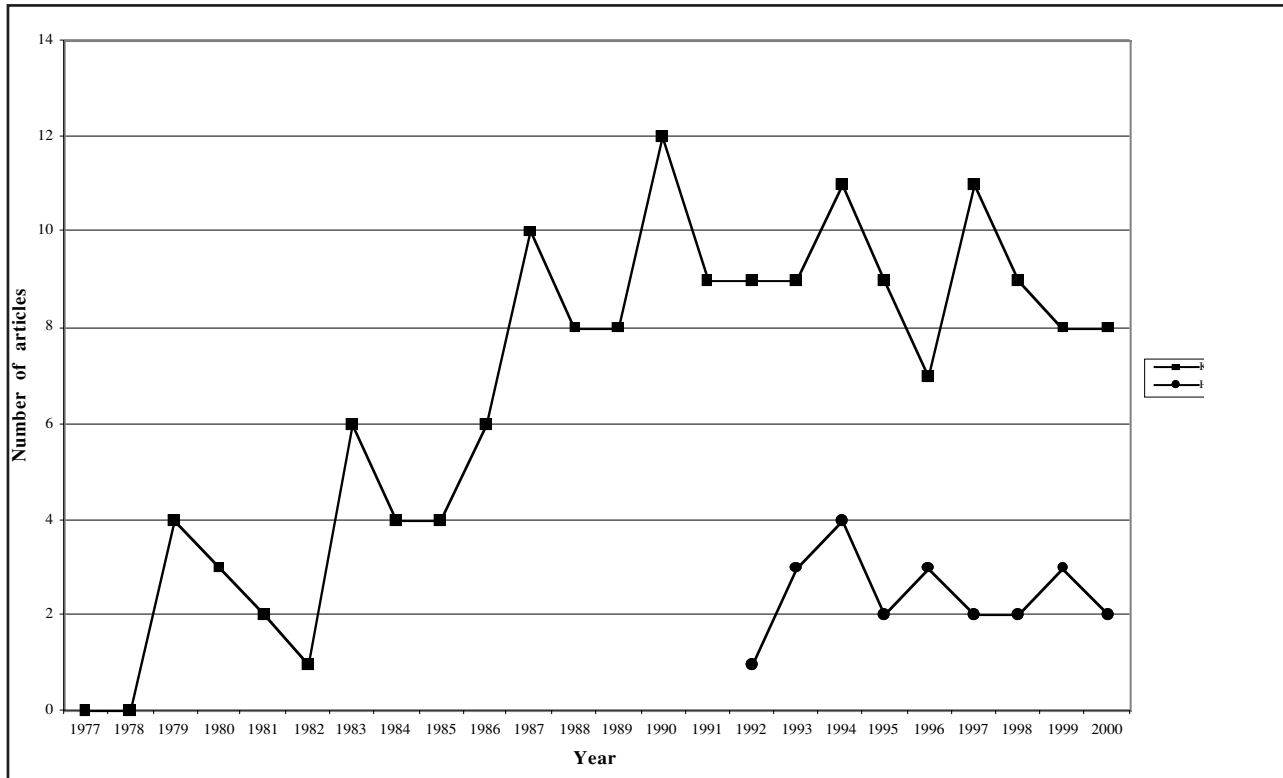
FINDINGS: CATEGORIZATION SCHEME

Findings reveal that from the 1970s to the 1990s, Kassirjian’s original themes were dominant, augmented by newer ones related to socio-cultural changes. The original data sources—marketer-generated mass communications in advertisements and other media—continued to be used, and the object of analysis was the messages’ manifest meanings. However, in the 1990s, three new research interests emerged: (1) refinement of quantitative methodology; (2) introduction of qualitative methodology; (3) and use of personal communications as data sources. The Table shows the categorization scheme that we derived from the post-1977 sample, and it reveals the extension and enrichment of the original themes. Kassirjian’s original two categories have evolved/expanded to five, of which three relate to data sources, including mass communications, personal communications, and disciplinary/academic documents; one relates to quantitative issues (problems and improvements); and one relates to qualitative methods. The following sections examine thematic expansion in detail.

1: Mass Communications: Advertisements and Other Media

Themes in mass communications including but not limited to advertisements form the largest category, comprising 114 articles (63%). And the articles can be grouped into three sub-categories.

FIGURE 1
Number of Articles in Sample, 1977-2000



A: Executional Devices.

Content analysis of executional devices is a new category, one that includes both macro and micro-level stimulus elements. On the macro level, themes include comparison of appeals by media (Bush and Leigh 1984), target market (Alexander, Benjamin, Hoerrner and Roe 1998), product (Cutler and Javalgi 1993; Turley and Kelley 1997), and so forth; on the micro level, they include small textual elements such as headline figures of speech (Beltramini and Blasko 1986; Leigh 1994; Soley and Reid 1983), cartoon characters and animation (Bush, Hair and Bush 1983; Kelly, Slater, Karan and Hunn 2000), color (Clarke and Honeycutt 2000; Huang 1993), and pictorial or musical elements (Haley, Staffaroni and Fox 1994). The trend toward close analysis of small textual units can be attributed to the incorporation of fine arts theory, semiotics, and literary criticism in consumer and advertising research, a development that began in the mid to late 1980s.

B: Informational/Emotional Appeals.

At about the same time, the original theme of informational content expanded to include the new themes of comparative ad content and emotional appeals, both of which arose in response to societal and disciplinary changes after 1977. Comparative advertising provides information about one named brand versus another, often including scientific evidence or product demonstrations to convey the superiority of the advertised brand. These appeals became popular in the 1970s, after the Federal Trade Commission began advocating brand comparisons (1972) to provide consumers with information that would enable them to evaluate competing brands. Television networks, which had long banned comparative ads, now permitted them, and the investigation of their effectiveness that began in the mid-70s (Wilkie and Farris (1975) still continues. Studies of comparative appeals in print media are

common, especially in magazine advertisements (Harmon, Razzouk and Stern 1983; Jackson, Brown and Harmon 1979; Swayne and Stevenson 1984, 1987), but also in direct mail (Stevenson and Swayne 1995).

In the late 1980s, content analysis of emotional advertising appeals was spurred by a confluence between the rise of "image" advertisements and the introduction of postmodern ideas in consumer research (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). The assumption that consumers are driven by rational motivations was re-examined, and researchers began to study the influence of emotions on consumer responses to advertising (Holbrook and Batra 1987; Olney, Holbrook and Batra 1991). Emotional advertisements appealing to positive feelings (humor, fun, nostalgia) or negative ones (guilt and fear) as well as cultural differences in attitudes to emotional appeals are the objects of interest in current research (Huhmann and Brotherton 1997; McCullough and Taylor 1993; Spotts, Weinberger and Parsons 1997; Stern 1992; Weinberger and Spotts 1989).

Nonetheless, even though post-1977 themes include emotional content, most of the articles in this category are about informational content, emphasizing a variety of information cues such as location, price, or hours presented to consumers, and the value of this information both to consumers and marketers (Abernathy and Franke 1996; Taylor 1997; Taylor and Taylor 1994; Zaichkowsky and Sadlowski 1991). Empirical studies examine differences in information content by media (Stern, Krugman and Resnik 1981; Stern and Resnik 1991), target market (Lee and Callcott 1994; Muehling and Kolbe 1998), and product (Abernathy and Butler 1993; Dube, Chattopadhyay and Letarte 1996; Grove, Pickett and Laband 1995; James and Vanden Bergh 1990). Cross-cultural comparisons gather evidence of relationships between a

TABLE
Themes of Content Analysis Research, 1977-2000

	Number of Articles		
	Element	Class	Theme
1. Mass Communications: Advertisements and Other Media			114
A. Executional Devices		13	
Macro-level stimulus elements	5		
Micro-level stimulus elements	8		
B. Informational / Emotional Appeals		43	
Comparative appeals	5		
Emotional appeals	8		
Information content	30		
C. Sociocultural Issues		58	
Portrayals of people (gender, race, age)	23		
Depiction of cultural values	30		
Product / brand placement in media (not ads)	5		
2. Content Analyses of Personal Communications			38
A. Consumer-generated Data		15	
B. Managerial / Employee-generated Data		23	
3. Content Analyses of Academic Literature			12
4. Advances in Content Analysis Methodology			6
5. Qualitative Methods: New Frameworks			10
		<i>Total</i>	<i>180</i>

country's regulatory environment and the informativeness of print and broadcast messages (Dowling 1980; Madden, Caballero and Matsukubo 1986; Mueller 1991; Rice and Lu 1988; Sepstrup 1985; Taylor, Miracle, and Wilson 1997; Weinberger and Spotts 1989). In the United States, marketing and public policy researchers monitor firms' compliance with government legislation and scrutinize the effectiveness of self-regulation programs (Kassarjian and Kassarjian 1988). This is particularly true in industries whose advertising is prone to controversy, notably cigarettes and tobacco (Ringold 1987; Ringold and Calfee 1989), drugs (Roth 1996; Shimp and Dyer 1979), food products (Pappalardo and Ringold 2000), and motor vehicles (Ford and Mazis 1996). Regulation of advertising stems from concerns about product risk disclosure and the nature of claim substantiation and aims at preventing misleading, deceptive, or "puffed" advertisements that exaggerate product attributes/benefits (Healey and Kassarjian 1983; Simonson and Holbrook 1993). Related research analyzes the information content of legal contracts to identify safeguards that effectively protect firms against opportunism in business-to-business exchanges (Achrol and Gundlach 1999; Gundlach and Achrol 1993).

C: Sociocultural Issues.

Research attention continues to focus on positive and negative stereotyping, with age-related themes now added to the original ones of women and minority images. The theme of women's media images now includes analysis of changing portrayals of women, effects of stereotyping on children, ad portrayals of the elderly. Synchronic analysis of media representations describes gender role portrayals in particular countries (Ford, Voli, Honeycutt and 1998) or media outlets (Reese, Whipple and Courtney 1987), and diachronic analysis presents evidence of women's shifting occupational roles

(Ferguson, Kreshel and Tinkham 1990; Zhou and Chen 1997). Studies of inappropriate gender stereotypes and advertising effectiveness (Jaffe and Berger 1994) emphasize negative effects on consumers, particularly vulnerable consumers such as children and teens, likely to be harmed by gender stereotyping (Browne 1998; Macklin and Kolbe 1984; Maynard and Taylor 1999). Interestingly, research by Klassen, Jasper and Schwartz (1993) was the only study in the sample that examined images of both men and women portrayed together in advertisements.

Many researchers have followed Kassarjian's proposal to examine depictions of blacks in advertising (Bristor, Lee and Hunt 1995; Motley 1995; Stevenson and Swayne 1999; Williams, Qualls and Grier 1995). In addition, new themes of minority underrepresentation or misrepresentation now include Asian-Americans (Taylor and Lee 1994) and Hispanics (Wilkes and Valenci 1989), reflecting the growth in minority immigration in the past two decades. Some articles develop more complex representational benchmarks by treating the racial composition of models along with their social and occupational roles (Stevenson 1991; Taylor and Stern 1997). Most recently, researchers have broadened the scope of inquiry by analyzing consumers' responses to ads targeted to different cultural groups (Grier and Brumbaugh 1999). Further, content analysis of portrayals of the elderly—an age group likely to be "disappeared" in advertisements—reflects the aging of the population as the baby-boomers grew older (Carrigan and Szmigin 1999; Peterson and Ross 1997; Swayne and Greco 1987; Ursic, Ursic and Ursic 1986).

Cultural values depicted in popular culture and other media follow the original suggestion that future research should branch out from analysis of more traditional media (novels, magazine

articles, advertisements) to more ephemeral ones such as comic books (Belk 1987), underground “comix” (Spiggle 1986), bumper stickers (Stern and Solomon 1992), and so forth. In spite of this progress, advertising remains the dominant source of data, for only a few studies examine the cultural values depicted in such long-established sources as magazine articles (Homburg and Pflesser 2000; Olson 1995) and novels (Friedman 1985). The themes in these studies tend to be the negative values associated with a commercialized society and the unintentionally negative ones in media targeted to the young. However, a new positive theme is the increase in ecological and environmental “green” advertisements, following the socio-cultural concern that arose in the 1980s when the public was made aware of the consequences of worldwide pollution and depletion of resources. New themes have arisen, such as types and prevalence of green appeals (Carlson, Grove and Kangun 1993; Peterson 1991), their structural characteristics (Iyer, Banerjee and Gulas 1994), strategic goals (Banerjee, Gulas and Iyer 1995), and tactics used to construct messages (Carlson, Grove, Lacznia and Kangun 1996). Related themes include evaluation of the accuracy of environmental claims (Polonsky et al. 1998) and consumers’ perceptions of green issues (Zimmer, Stafford and Stafford 1994).

From the late 1980s on, articles about value changes across space, time, and media began to appear, extending the original themes both spatially and temporally. The theme of changing representations of time and timestyles relates to that of gender images, with women’s time-impoverishment a new development (Gross and Sheth 1989). Other changes in consumer values are also content analyzed, including those depicted in advertisements for a single product such as automobiles (Tansey, Hyman and Zinkhan 1990), an entire industry, especially tobacco and cigarette ads (King, Reid, Moon and Ringold 1991), and advertising itself in a newly Westernized country (Zhou and Belk 1993). Single country studies of value appeals consider advertisers’ adoption of new values (Lill, Gross and Peterson 1986), the shifting incidence of specific social values such as achievement and motivation (Zinkhan, Hong and Lawson 1990), and the character of a nation’s value system (Hetsroni 2000).

Changes in values across countries in terms of themes such as globalization, Westernization, standardization, and similarities/differences between cultures are also associated with economic changes in the 1990s. Among such changes are the rise of Pacific Rim nations as world-class competitors, rapid growth in developing nations, and ongoing debate about economic alliances, most recently, NAFTA. American advertising is compared to that of longtime trading partners like Japan (Hong, Muderrisoglu and Zinkhan 1987; Javalgi, Cutler and Malhotra 1995; Mueller 1992) or the United Kingdom (Cutler and Javalgi 1994) and emerging partners including China (Cheng and Schweitzer 1996), Korea (Cho, Gentry and Cropp 1999) and Taiwan (Zandpour, Chang, and Catalano 1992). Multi-country comparisons offer additional insight into different nations’ advertising styles (Albers-Miller and Gelb 1996; Graham, Cutler and Javalgi 1992; Karmins and Oetomo 1993).

Changes in values in persuasive messages across different media vehicles are associated with the rise of product placements since 1982, when sales of Reese’s Pieces rose 70% after being featured in *E.T.* Themes of placement effects of covert persuasive messages—those embedded in entertainment or educational vehicles—occur in studies of brand placements in television programs (Avery and Ferraro 2000); brand associations with major television characters (Way 1984); alcohol and tobacco product placements in soap operas (Diener 1993) or magazine articles

(Ford, Ringold and Rogers 1990); and brand placements in curriculum materials for classroom use (Rudd and Buttolph 1987). New interest in the ethics of placements reflects the success of product embeds at a time when the effectiveness of advertising persuasiveness is being questioned.

2: Content Analyses of Personal Communications

The most innovative change since 1977 is the addition of personal communications—consumer-generated and employee-generated verbal protocols—as new data sources. Nonetheless, expansion of the source is rooted in early conceptualizations of “content” by Berelson, Kerlinger, Holsti, and Lasswell, which Kassarian summarizes as “the communications that people have produced” (Kerlinger, in Kassarian, p. 9). What has occurred is a broadening of the concept of “verbal and symbolic behavior” encoded in written and spoken language (p. 8) now taken to include analysis of language in real-life communication. The thematic subcategories based on the data sources are consumer-generated and employee/manager-generated responses to open-ended or survey questions.¹

A: Consumer-generated Data.

Latent and manifest meanings encoded in consumers’ thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about media representations, especially advertisements, are related to the study of media documents themselves. For example, themes such as consumer ad comprehension (Mick 1992), brand associations (Bijmolt, Wedel, Pieters and DeSarbo 1998; Curlo and Lerman 1999), and aspects of the decision-making process (Miyazaki, Langenderfer and Sprott 1999; Palan and Wilkes 1997; Reynolds and Gutman 1988) link stimuli appeals to response effects in boundary-spanning research that connects the field of consumer behavior to that of advertising. Once the consumer’s words became the object of interest, themes such as the nature of consumer responses to the real-world consumption environment as distinct from responses to media representations reveal themes about shopping experiences and retailing. For example, consumers have been asked about their impressions of retail stores (Zimmer and Golden 1988), buying impulses (Rook 1987), unmet shopping needs (Lambert 1979), salesperson role performance (Harich and LaBahn 1998), gift-giving (Goodwin, Smith and Spiggle 1990; Mick and DeMoss 1990; Mick, DeMoss and Faber 1992; Ruth, Otnes and Brunel 1999), and attachment to irreplaceable possessions (Grayson and Schulman 2000).

B: Managerial/Employee-generated Data.

In the second category, data sources include employee- and manager-generated protocols as well as consumer verbatims. Themes related to the consumption environment are commonly found in service industry research, where the critical incident technique (CIT) is used to generate consumer and employee responses about satisfaction/dissatisfaction with service processes (Bitner, Booms and Tetreault 1990; Goodwin, Grove and Fisk 1996; Grove and Fisk 1997; Williams and Burns 1994), brand switching (Keaveney 1995), negative (positive) word of mouth (Sundaram, Mitra and Webster 1998), and complaining behavior (Davidow and Dacin 1997; Garrett and Meyers 1996; Stephens and Gwinner 1998). Manager-generated data can be found in the supply chain, sales management, and marketing strategy literature, which includes themes such as relationships with channel partners (Bello and Williamson 1985; Gundlach and Cadotte 1994), effective team

¹Content analysis of verbal data is also called “protocol analysis” and “discourse analysis,” terms that are used interchangeably even though they are not identical.

building (Barczak and Wilemon 1989, 1992; McDonough 2000; Morgan and Piercy 1998), evaluations of salesperson performance (DeCarlo and Leigh 1996; Evans, Kleine, Landry and Crosby 2000; Perrien, Paradis and Banting 1995), the buying process (Kennedy 1993; Woodside and Sherrell 1980) and strategy formulation (Frankwick, Walker, and Ward 1994; Frankwick, Ward, Hutt and Reingen 1994; Varadarajan and Johnston 1987).

3: Content Analysis of Research Impact

The original focus on disciplinary text has broadened into the increasing use of content analysis to examine marketing literature. Since the mid-1980s, journal articles and SSCI author citations are used as data for the purposes of identifying current “where we are” knowledge, research trends over time, and publication quality. In this way, the original theme of research readability has been expanded to include the impact of the discipline’s scholarly output (Oliva and Reidenbach 1985; Tripp 1997; Ward, Klees and Wackman 1999), individual contributions to research (Holbrook 1992; Jacoby 1995; Passadeos, Phelps and Kim 1998), and journals (Tellis, Chandy and Ackerman 1999; Yale and Gilly 1988). The theme of authorial “impact on the field,” especially popular in the tenure and promotion process, is found in articles that present citation analysis of various authors’ works, often considered a proxy measurement for determining an author’s contribution to knowledge. Knowledge synthesis is also advanced by means of topical literature reviews (Tyebee 1979; Varadarajan and Ramanujam 1990) and meta-analysis of research findings (Farley, Lehmann and Ryan 1981; Ryan and Barclay 1983).

4: Advances in Content Analysis Methodology

The post-1990s emergence of methodological articles revisits the *how* of content analysis, especially the controversial matter of reliability. Kolbe and Burnett (1991) examined the problematics of reliability and validity in 1978-1989 research; Hughes and Garrett (1990) proposed a generalizability theory approach to apportion variance based on raters and coding conditions; and Finn and Kayande (1997) demonstrated additional benefits of improved reliability assessment. The methodological shift is reaffirmed by a 1995 content analysis of articles published in the *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* that identified the most frequently studied issues as “data representativeness, reliability, and validity” (Riffe and Freitag 1997, p. 521). The common theme is the method itself, with evaluative articles that examine adherence to the original guidelines stating that content analysis methodology “must be *objective, systematic, and quantitative.*” (Kassarjian 1977, p. 9, italics in original) and/or propose improvements in the calculation of intercoder reliability. Among the topics studied are the difficulty in coding “fuzzy data” (Varki, Cooil and Rust 2000); the development of computer programs to calculate measures of intercoder reliability (Kang, Kara, Laskey, and Seaton 1993); and a warning the unreliability of communication content as a measure of effects on consumers’ knowledge, attitudes, or behavior (Cohen 1989).

5: Qualitative Methods: New Frameworks

After the Consumer Odyssey in 1987, articles began to appear in which qualitative methods adapted from other disciplines were used to derive new typologies. Most of these articles can be categorized as “pre-content analysis,” for new frameworks and themes were proposed for future content analysis, but no data sources were themselves content analyzed. Among the methods proposed were textual analysis, found in sources such as literary criticism (Stern 1989), semiotics (Holbrook and Grayson 1986), and rhetoric (Bush and Boller 1991), and ethnographic analysis,

found primarily in ethnography (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994), but also in sociology and anthropology (Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf 1988; Greco and Swayne 1992). The purpose of these articles was to build grounded theory inductively by examining the data first and then introducing new frameworks for generating categories and developing coding schemes. For example, Stern’s articles on textual analysis of advertising offer directives to identify the formal properties of persuasive communications such as the type of company persona who speaks the message (1988a) or the allegorical conventions that underlie the message (1988b). These papers also exemplify the use of techniques to study latent as well as manifest content, another noticeable change. Interpretive techniques have been used to explore experiential aspects of consumption, identify thematic dimensions, and synthesize information into new frameworks (for a review see Spiggle 1994 or Stern 1998). Qualitative research aims at building innovative coding schemes for use in future content analyses. Comparisons between content analysis and other methods such as rhetorical analysis, syntactic analysis, degrees-of-freedom analysis, or the nominal group technique focus on methodological differences between quantitative and qualitative analysis (Claxton, Ritchie and Zaichkowsky 1980; Wilson and Woodside 1999).

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, this study’s investigation of content analysis research themes indicates that Kassarjian’s original themes served as a framework for expanded topical domains over time. Findings show that the current framework has been enriched by sociocultural and disciplinary changes such as the emergence of new themes, data sources, qualitative methods, disciplinary self-reflexiveness, and renewed interest in quantitative examination. Rather than discarding the original themes, researchers have applied them to new situations, and we found no articles that challenged the original questions. Hence, the study provides empirical support for the claims that Kassarjian’s article served as a benchmark for later thematic research and that the method remains a vital addition to the researcher’s tool kit.

Many research opportunities lie ahead, for the categories can be further enriched by the new themes, data sources, and media that arise in a rapidly changing environment. In the sociocultural category, for example, emergent topics as well as neglected ones await future researchers. Among the under-studied themes are political advertising, values in newly capitalist countries, theme-media relationships, and new media advertising. New ones surface regularly, such as the shrinking economy, an increase in minority populations, and the upsurge in patriotism after the terrorist attacks. So, too, do new media, including but not limited to the Internet, which provide fertile grounds for research on themes relevant to unexplored data types such as banner ads, chat groups, and edutainment; readily available data sources such as digital archives of print and TV ads; and legal or ethical issues such as privacy laws, content regulations, or ethical codes for research.

New synergies between qualitative methods and personal data sources also pave the way for innovative multi-method research that combines content analysis of textual stimuli with more accurate measurement of consumer response effects. Qualitative studies that adapt literary and language theory to advertising messages have led to greater awareness of executional or formal elements, allowing researchers to construct advertising stimuli free from confounds and to measure their effects empirically (Riffe, Lacy and Fico 1989). The confluence between qualitative analyses and empirical testing is likely to accelerate theory development by enabling researchers to derive theoretically grounded hypotheses testable in

experiments that elicit open-ended responses. The future of content analysis as a technique adaptable to research on themes as yet unthought of is bright, for the method's limits still seem to be "only the limits of the ingenuity and creativity of the consumer researcher" (Kassarjian 1977, p. 16).

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'THE QUIET MARKET'

A Critical Realist Account of C2C Exchange in the West of Ireland

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a single case example of exchange in a C2C setting. This case is drawn from a longitudinal qualitative and quantitative study of a Local Exchange Trading System (LETS) group in Westport, County Mayo on the West coast of Ireland known as Meitheal Na Mart (MnM). LETS are a system of economic exchange designed primarily to free members from the labour-wage economy. This paper uses critical realism to illustrate the causal relationship between the focal actors behaviour as well as the causal potentialities and the environment in which she operated.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of consumer-to-consumer (henceforth referred to as C2C) exchange has only rarely been considered by researchers in consumer behaviour, or other fields of socio-economic enquiry. As Grayson (1999) points out there have been some exceptions although a great deal of fundamental exploration is required to establish this area as one of value to the mainstream reader of consumer research. This paper reports the findings of a longitudinal, qualitative and quantitative study of a system of C2C exchange. The paper has two purposes. Firstly to illustrate the variety of influences that can affect the progress of an individual acting as both buyer and seller. Secondly to highlight the potential for critical realism to provide a pathway to understanding this and other economic behaviours. The paper progresses through four main stages, an explanation of critical realism, an introduction to the case study location, the presentation of the case study and a discussion of some of the issues arising from this case.

CRITICAL REALISM

As Easton (2000) suggests, realism has broadly won a long battle to take the position as the leading epistemology within marketing. This paper, its theoretical framework and approach to data analysis are built around one particular form of this known as Critical Realism. Historically Critical Realism is traced to the work of Roy Bhaskar (1975) however its origins can be more readily accessed in the work Collier (1994), and Sayer (2000). In this section, the 'bare bones' of this understanding will be reviewed and their implications discussed. The emphasis is on the potential for critical realism as an alternative ontology for studies of the kind undertaken here.

The Transitive and Intransitive Dimensions of Knowledge

The basic belief of the critical realist is that a reality exists, can be discovered and exists independently of the researcher (Easton, 1998). This is built from Bhaskar's (1975) distinction between 'transitive' and 'intransitive' aspects of knowledge. The objects of study are the intransitive dimensions. Regardless of the theories that explain them, or the changes in those theories, they remain the same. The transitive dimension refers to the explanatory theories that can and do change. As Collier (1994: 51 in Sayer, 2000) puts it, while different branches of science may have different theories (transitive objects) the objects of study (intransitive dimensions) remain the same—otherwise there would not be rival theories.

The Real, the Actual, and the Empirical

As was discussed above, critical realism distinguishes between the real world and the researcher's experience of that world. However, it also distinguishes between the real, the actual, and the empirical worlds. Sayer (2000: 11-12) outlines the distinctions particularly well. The *real* is whatever exists, be it natural or social regardless of whether it is of interest to the researcher. The real is also the location of objects, their structures, and powers. Every object has structures and powers, causal liabilities and passive abilities, or the capacities to behave and change in certain ways. The task of the critical realist is to identify relationships and possibilities given these properties. The *actual* refers to the outcomes when these structures, powers, and capacities are activated. The *empirical* is the domain of experience. Insofar as it is possible to do so successfully, this may refer to the real or the actual. However, it may not always be possible to observe a phenomenon. Such observability may lead to researcher confidence about existence. For the critical realist, existence does not depend upon observability. They also accept a causal criterion. That is, a reasonable case for the existence for unobservable entities may be made from observation of effects that could only be explained by the products of such entities. The next level of this position is that powers may exist unexercised. That is, what has been observed to happen in a particular situation may not be the sum of all possibilities. Different configurations of real objects at a particular time may lead to a different set of outcomes. Critical realism is thus particularly useful at explaining change and dynamics in social settings.

Stratification and Emergence

The 'stratified' distinction between the real, actual, and empirical differentiates critical realism from other 'flat' epistemologies offering either the actual or the empirical. In addition, critical realism characterises a world of emergence. That is, two or more features may lead to the emergence of a phenomenon. However, that object is not reducible to its constituent parts. Sayer (2000) suggests the relationship between water and its constituent parts of hydrogen and oxygen as one example of this. Socially, similar relationships apply. For example, a marketing manager's ability to act is drawn from a complex of powers related to their relationships and the institutions within which they operate. This sensitivity to context makes social phenomena far more susceptible to change than their counterparts in the natural world. The implication for theorising is the need to constantly re-examine concepts for relevance.

Causation

One of the most prominent aspects of critical realism is its approach to causation. As has already been discussed, objects are part of structures. Structures consist of a set of related elements with a set of causal powers that when combined are emergent from those of their constituents. The outcome of the activation of causal powers depends upon the conditions that exist at the time of action. For critical realists, causation is not understood as the regularity of occurrence of particular events, as positivists might suggest. Rather, identifying the causal mechanisms that underlie an event, how they

work, and how they have been activated provides an understanding of causation. The understanding of a mechanism is dependent on revealing the nature of the structure or object that possesses the mechanism or power. Exploring the nature of causal powers further it can be said that the same causal powers can produce different outcomes, depending on the conditions that prevail at the time. Equally, different causal mechanisms can produce the same result. Thus when an effect or event is observed it should be borne in mind that this may or may not have been the only possible outcome. A different configuration could have led to a different effect. The final point to make regarding causation is that it is a fallible process. It requires some judgement to identify the various elements of the causative relationship. However, such judgement is a characteristic of all scientific effort.

The Interpretative or Hermeneutic Dimensions

Critical realism recognises that social phenomena have an intrinsic meaning that is not simply externally descriptive but also constitutive of them (Sayer, 2000: 17). Such meaning requires interpretation and so there is an inevitable interpretative hermeneutic element to social science. Where critical realism differs from hermeneutics is in its requirement to explain material aspects of life. Secondly, critical realism views reasons as potentially playing a causative role in the sense that they prompt actors to behave differently. The example that Sayer (2000) provides is the link between voting behaviour and the political experience of the individual.

The Critical Dimension

The critical aspect of critical realism gives it a licence to be critical of the practices and subjects that it studies. This is linked in particular to Bhaskar's belief in the emancipatory potential of social science. This is driven by the recognition that social science is based on ideas, where these ideas are the cause of unjust behaviour it is the duty of the researcher to intervene.

LOCAL EXCHANGE TRADING SYSTEMS (LETS) AND MEITHEAL NA MART

LETS are complex socio-economic systems that have been characterised in a variety of ways. The most succinct description of LETS has been provided by Williams (1996) 'LETS are local associations whose members list their offers of, and requests for, goods and services in a directory, and then exchange them priced in a local unit of currency (e.g. acorns in Totnes, favours in Calderdale). To maintain a record of the exchanges, cheques written in the local currency are sent to a treasurer who functions in a similar manner to a normal bank, sending out regular statements of account to members. No notes or coins are issued and neither is any interest charged or paid. As such, the local currency functions as a 'scoring system', much like matchsticks in baby-sitting circles. It has no 'value' outside of the local system. The local currency accumulated by members can be used to buy other local goods and services offered on the system. LETS, moreover, are a source of interest-free credit since members can spend local currency before earning it'. (Williams, 1996: 231).

The Westport LETS system, known by the Irish name of Meitheal na mart (henceforth referred to as MnM) was officially launched in February 1993. Like all LETS it had its own currency, known as the Reek, so called after Croagh Patrick, the local mountain that dominates the region, and which is referred to as the Reek. MnM had a sophisticated accounting function with a regular circulation to each member of his or her financial position within the system. Other publications included a newsletter and a directory

that listed the contact details for every actor and the goods or services they sought to make available. Exchange took place in a number of formats, between actors, at a weekly stall in the town market square, at regular Reek only auctions and through work parties when groups of members would visit the home of another members to carry out some large project, usually over a weekend.

A CRITICAL REALIST ACCOUNT OF EXCHANGE IN MEITHEAL NA MART

In this section, the basic model of causation offered by Sayer (2000) is worked through to identify why one actor in MnM behaved as she did. The case study reported here is the result of a three-year case study of the group in question. Data was collected from three main sources, interviews with regular members of the system and with key informants. Like many LETS systems this one operated a computerised central banking function which recorded the date and value of transactions between members for the years of the case study. Finally, MnM produced a number of publications, directory's and newsletters many of which were made available in the course of the case study. A process of member check was operated through multiple interviews with members such as the one featured below, Maureen. Also, leading members were presented with summary findings and their feedback sought. We shall now proceed with the case analysis.

Event

In this case the event that we wish to consider is the behaviour of one actor, Maureen, within MnM. The event can be specific along two dimensions, firstly why she became a member of MnM and secondly why she behaved as she did in the system. Maureen had been a member of MnM since its inception. Her exchange behaviour is summarised in table one below. Maureen had significant exchange partnerships with actors 13, 40 and 124. With actor 13 Maureen had exchanges in 1995 and 1996. This exchange totalled 12 purchases and 8 sales episodes in 1995 and 5 purchases and one sale in 1996. The value of these purchases was 1033 and 200 Reeks in 1995 and 1996 respectively. The value of sales was 1800 and 73 Reeks in 1995 and 1996 respectively. The total value and volume of sales and purchases are summarised in the final column on the right. What this shows is that Maureen had 17 purchasing and 9 selling exchanges with actor 13. The total value of these being 1233 and 1873 Reeks respectively. The final three rows summarise Maureen's total exchange behaviour that is purchases and sales, both with the highlighted significant partners and with all other actors in the system. Total personal exchanges summarises the value and volume of activity with other individual actors. Total stall exchange summarises the value and volume of activity that took place through the weekly market stall operated by MnM.

In aggregate Maureen's exchange behaviour can be described in a number of ways. Firstly, she is a high volume actor who has bought and sold more than average in the system. From table one below it can be seen that the total number of exchanges Maureen undertook during the study period was 164 (81 purchases and 83 sales). As can be seen from the break down by year, there was some fluctuation in this level of activity between years.

Secondly, she has bought and sold roughly the same number of times. What is interesting about this is that, as with the total activity measure this figure fluctuates between years, its fluctuation is broadly consistent across each year. For example, in 1998 Maureen had 9 purchases and five sales, compared to 31 purchases and 23 sales in 1997. It is unclear what this pattern is indicative of, however, strict reciprocity can be ruled out. This actor had only

TABLE ONE
Time and Value Analysis of Maureen’s Exchange Behaviour

Partner/Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	Volume: Buy/Sell Value: Buy/Sell
13	12/8 1033/1800	5/1 200/73	-	-	17/9 1233/1873
40	0/2 0/260	2/0 350/0	-	-	2/2 350/260
124	-	2/0 500/0	3/0 2380/0	-	5/0 2880/0
Total Personal Exchanges	18/16 2,198/3830	9/4 1,050/473	6/8 2,710/2100	5/0 114/0	38/23 6,072/6,423
Total Stall Exchanges	11/21 1,492/1685	3/14 200/1,340	25/21 2,474/3106	4/5 94/196	43/60 4,260/6,307
Total Exchanges	29/37 3690/5515	12/18 1250/1813	31/23 5184/5206	9/5 208/196	81/83 10332/12730

three significant exchange patterns, actors 13, 40 and 124. Significant exchange partners are those with whom Maureen had four or more exchanges over the four-year period of the case study. As with activity, so with pricing, Maureen charged roughly the same prices for sales as she paid for purchases. The final noteworthy feature of Maureen’s behaviour relates to her partner network. As was noted above she had relatively few relational partners, but she did exchange with a wide range of other actors within the system.

To summarise, Maureen was an active trader with a wider network of partners, although only three of these could be described as significantly relational. In the following section a mechanism to explain this behaviour will be presented.

Mechanism

It can be suggested that the mechanism through which this was achieved was recognition by Maureen that the system could meet a significant proportion of her social, political and economic needs.

Structure

In explaining Maureen’s behaviour we know that every actor within MnM exists within a set of necessary relations, what is referred to as structure. This structure is comprised of three main elements: a social exchange with the system, an acceptance of the Reek as a measure and store of value and Maureen’s own exchange strategy. Each of these is considered in turn.

Social Exchange

Although not from the local area, Maureen was historically a rural Irish person, having spent her childhood in a small town on the East coast. She had moved to Westport in search of an alternative way of life that she felt would provide healing for the suffering she had endured although Maureen was generally unspecific about the nature of this suffering. However the principle of relief is significant in two ways. Firstly, when she arrived in Westport she was in search of a place where she felt she could belong. The achievement of this

was secured through interaction with other actors living in the Westport region. She explained her experience as follows ‘...when I landed in Westport it was like home, I started connecting with people straight away’. She felt that ‘...Westport... has a striking hold on people and what people are doing here is...looking at their lives, they are looking for more in their lives, they are looking to find happiness’. Together these forces suggest two emergent processes. The first was the creation of a cultural space around the Westport region. This was because the presence of a group of people with similar aspirations for social and personal change gave credence to plans for action within which a LETS such as MnM might reasonably be expected to prosper. Secondly, as Maureen saw her own issues being solved in a group setting it could be suggested that she was prone to identifying with and participating in, group solutions to social issues. This predisposed her not only to membership of, but also enthusiasm for, groups such as MnM.

The idea of Westport as a particular cultural space suited to LETS type exchange can be treated further by considering Maureen’s socio-political ideology. That is her belief about how society, particularly in proximate rural locations, should operate and feed into broader society. Maureen felt that the difficulties of modern life actors arose because ‘...people are getting too materialistic, their sole aim is to be independent of one another... they have to have all of these material things that enables them to be totally independent of one another’. What Maureen possesses that perhaps the majority do not is the memory of a society in which such a system of social governance did not prevail. Although only in her late thirties Maureen can recall the operation of a Meitheal system in the area she lived in as a child. She described how she ‘...grew up exchanging with others...the financial stage was very, very minimal and so...you’re always depending on others...there was a lot of exchanging going on because there wasn’t enough money to be totally independent’. From these two statements we can see that Maureen could not only anticipate a role for a co-operative exchange system such as LETS but could also anticipate both how the system as a

whole might work and also what her role within the system might be. It might be suggested that this structural element left her well disposed to enthusiastic participation in LETS exchange. A final aspect of this was the role Maureen felt that MnM could play in educating her children. Two of her children were old enough to be youth members of MnM, she felt that it could play an important role in allowing them 'to get a feel of that letting go (of material things)...to share things, pass them round, reuse them'.

To summarise the social relationship between Maureen and MnM could be seen as one in which Maureen identified Westport as a location for personal healing. Such healing could be best achieved in a group setting. Westport provided a significant number of people with a similar aspiration. MnM was one formal institutional structure through which such change, healing or development could be achieved. In addition, Maureen expressed a particularly communitarian socio-political ideology which identified economics as a particular reason for the breakdown of traditional societal structures. This suggests a particular social alignment between Maureen and an alternative system of exchange such as MnM.

The Reek as a Medium of Exchange and a Store of Wealth

The second structural aspect of Maureen's participation in MnM is her acceptance of the Reek or local currency as a store of wealth and a medium of exchange. This aspect of Maureen's membership is particularly interesting. For her it appears that the Reek was not a particularly noteworthy store of wealth. She pointed out that '...the figures don't mean that much to me... they would only mean a lot if I became aware if I was in the red hugely...'. What is interesting about this is that her strong positive balance is not too important to her. However, a negative or debit balance would not be acceptable. This issue is discussed further below. The need to maintain this balanced relationship within the system was highlighted when Maureen pointed out that in the future she expected to be charging Reeks for jobs that she had done for 'free' because she wanted to use Reeks to part pay for a new house she planned to build. There does appear to be a contradiction in this understanding on the part of Maureen. However, the explanation is consistent with the earlier discussion of her social relationship with MnM. For this actor the Reek played an unusual role, essentially it was a lubricant for exchange in the sense that it gave her the ability to ask for services from another, but to also accept their refusal or to refuse services to another, without a loss of face.

This suggests the presence of an emergent property of the system. In its fundamental form, LETS proposes a market within which actors exchange goods and services for a local rather than a national currency. As discussed earlier actors can borrow against the LETS currency, interest free, in order to improve their standard of living. Maureen has taken an alternative route in which she has actively avoided taking on debt, and views deficit as a negative within the system. It has been suggested that the location of MnM in Westport provided the system with a supportive cultural environment and was an important reason for its success. This approach to the currency may be one of the costs of that location. Many rural people have an informal system of exchange within which reciprocity is not measured but is carefully noted (Salazar, 1996). This exchange culture has overlapped with that of MnM to create a hybrid within which people were willing to exchange, felt liberated to exchange but were unwilling to rely on the system as a source of finance for that trade. The significance of this emergent property lies in the effect it had and looks likely to continue to have on Maureen's trade in the future. If she had valued the Reek or local currency more highly perhaps she would have traded more actively and recorded her exchanges more accurately. She notes that for

future exchanges she will record her credits more accurately as she wishes to use Reeks to support a building project. She could have relied on readily available Reek credit to complete this work but instead she seeks to build a surplus in advance.

To summarise, for Maureen the Reek was a useful medium of exchange in that it removed the notion of reciprocal obligation. This will have contributed to her perception of the system as one within which trade was possible. However, it could not be significantly observed as a store of wealth. Finally, the system of exchange that appears to prevail in MnM is an emergent property of its structure rather than a feature of its intended design.

Actor Exchange Strategy

The final structural element to be considered is Maureen's exchange strategy within MnM. Maureen was clear as to what the role of exchange in MnM was in her overall portfolio of economic activities. She saw LETS as 'running alongside' the main economic activities of her household, providing 'bits and pieces' in addition to the necessities provided for by national economy employment. This was a common feature of exchange in MnM as actors felt that they could easily secure luxuries through the system. These luxuries often arose through hobby services such as massage or alternative therapies of various kinds. Alternatively they arose through goods purchased at the weekly stall. The latter was the one most commonly employed by Maureen at the time of interview. Although she had offered her labour for Reeks in the early stages of the system.

To summarise, Maureen was apparently a convenience actor, who improved the margins of her material life through LETS exchanges. What this review of structure has revealed is an actor with a strong historical disposition to co-operative ventures such as LETS. In addition, she had a clear understanding of how the system might work for her and the contribution that she might make to it. In the following section, the impact of contingent relations on this structure will be used to explain the dynamic aspects of Maureen's exchange profile.

IDENTIFYING THE IMPACT OF CONTINGENT RELATIONS

To explain the outcome of Maureen's exchange behaviour it is necessary to examine the contingent relations that arose during the course of her membership of MnM. In this case the particular product/service offering, the overlap between the national and local economy and the interaction of social and economic forces appear to have been most significant. Each is discussed below.

Product/Service Offering

Maureen offered both a service and goods for sale in MnM. The service was her own labour that was offered for Reeks only to actor 13 who was setting up a cheese business and required assistance. This established a significant base of high activity for Maureen within the system. This valuable service was offered not simply because it was what Maureen was capable of, if that were the case all actors in the system would offer similar resources. This was certainly not the case. Rather the high volume of activity associated with this service was a result of Maureen's willingness to provide it for Reeks only and the valuable and high demand nature of the service to the entrepreneurial actor 13. An emergent consequence of this exchange was that Maureen accumulated large amount of Reeks for her services, through the operation of the enthusiasm mechanism she also set out to spend these Reeks. Table one demonstrates the almost balanced nature of Maureen's activity with the value of buying and selling almost equal. The goods that Maureen offered for sale can be treated together. In the early days

of the system Maureen and other actors baked bread for sale through the stall. The purpose being to convince others that they system could provide for daily needs and so was a worthwhile activity. Maureen's other offering was household goods sold through the weekly stall. In each case Maureen was offering generally desirable goods, at substantial discount to normal prices through the central distribution mechanism for the system. The products and services that Maureen offered through the system were highly valuable. She offered these as a result of her own enthusiasm for the match between the ideals MnM and her own social, economic and political outlook. In addition, we also know that her purchasing ambition within the system during the period of the case study at least were limited to marginal enhancements of her utility through buying 'bits and pieces' as they became available. Thus the product/service offering contingency offers one particularly persuasive explanation for the high activity profile of Maureen's account.

Thus far the explanation of Maureen's exchange behaviour has focussed on explaining the enthusiastic nature of her participation in MnM. However, it should be noted that in the final year of the case study her activity had subsided. The following two contingencies will consider reasons for this reduction.

Overlap between the National and Local Economy

When MnM was initiated in 1993, Ireland was an economic backwater notable only for high unemployment and emigration, particularly from the West coast where Westport is located. However, the so-called Celtic Tiger of the 1990's would see the country enjoy double digit growth. By the mid 1990's this growth had seeped from the industrialised east coast to the rural West and was particularly felt in Westport. From an exchange perspective within MnM this meant that the material need of many actors to participate in MnM was reduced or eliminated. The effect of this on Maureen was to reduce the number of opportunities she had for trading with other actors. The implications of this will be considered in conjunction with the next contingency.

Interaction of Economic and Social Exchange

The interaction of economic and social exchange is an interesting and significant explanation both for fluctuation and reduction of Maureen's economic commitment within the system. Essentially this contingency suggest that relationships that begin with an economic orientation, that is actors trading Reeks for goods or services, move beyond the MnM framework as the social relationship between actors develops. Maureen offers one particular example of this. She highlights one particular exchange partner within which this occurred. She noted that '*...we had a lot of transactions, it was just more handy than saying this amount for Reeks, you owe me this amount... because there was definite things that he was doing for us and definite things he wanted one for him*'. This outcome can be considered in two ways. The first is as an inevitable result of the type of local and social interaction that occurs in rural areas. If, as Maureen points out there was ongoing direct exchange between two actors it is perhaps not surprising that such exchange would move beyond the system. However, if the earlier consideration of Maureen's commitment to the MnM project is revisited this behaviour is actually very surprising. Why would this actor wish to undermine a system to which she had such a large commitment?

There was considerable evidence in the case as a whole that, over time, intra-system feuds reduced the willingness of actors to trade with each other. It also retarded the type of enthusiastic idealism for the system that many such as Maureen showed at the outset. One emergent consequence of this from an individual actors perspective was to lead to a reliance on reciprocation rather than the

open market for exchange opportunities. This explanation interestingly does not undermine the confidence that Maureen showed in the Reek and its ability to repay efforts as discussed earlier. Her understanding of the system was primarily a personal one '*...I just know there are enough people in that system to do something for me for Reeks if I wanted*'.

To summarise, it has been seen that Maureen, as a result of the dynamics of the system explains her reduction in trading through the emergence of reciprocal, non-system exchange with key exchange partners. It is suggested that such behaviour is a widespread pattern within the system.

DISCUSSION: CRITICAL REALISM AND C2C BEHAVIOUR

This paper presented an outline of an emerging epistemology that is having a significant impact on a variety of social sciences. In this instance it has been employed to explore a single case of an actor involved in a system of C2C exchange.

Much of consuming behaviour is rightly seen as taking place within a dominant socio-economic framework with a particular set of values, aspirations and pre-ordained behaviours. This case has provided an insight onto how individuals behave economically when such a control structure is removed. Most significantly in the context of current debates within consumer research relating to resistance of the market economy, this paper demonstrates the difficulty of such resistance beyond existing social, cultural, economic and political structures. In order to explore this effect in greater detail further cases and a different event focus will be required. This will be the subject of further papers arising from this research project. Such contributions will go some way towards resolving the challenge to consumer researchers set by DiMaggio and Louch (1998) who pointed out that the deficiency of knowledge regarding the social organisation of exchange in C2C markets. Finally, we can suggest that the ability of critical realism to offer an alternative to linear additive approaches to explanation of social phenomenon is worthy of some further attention amongst consumer researchers.

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Social Influence on Post Purchase Brand Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

Self-determination and attribution theory form the basis for examining differences in brand attitudes following purchase decisions for a university education (Study 1) and an automobile (Study 2). In the first study, we examine differences in attitudes in those who recently entered the university (freshmen) vs. those whose entry is more distant (sophomores), testing for differences based on whether family or peers influenced the decision to enter the university. In Study 2, we test for differences in post purchase brand attitudes due to recent/distant purchase time, family and peer influence and consumption purpose (functional/hedonic). Brand attitudes remain highest for those who independently purchased an automobile for hedonic reasons. The worst-case brand attitude scenario occurs for distant functional purchases heavily influenced by family and friends. Implications for personal selling and advertising management, social persuasion theory and marketing pedagogy, and future research conclude the paper.

POST-PURCHASE BRAND ATTITUDES AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Consumers purchasing expensive, high involvement products or services that are used or consumed over relatively long periods of time are likely to frequently revisit their purchase decision. With many products and services, the newness wears off and altered brand attitudes may lead to cognitive dissonance and subsequent switching behavior. As the consumer gains experience with the product or service, s/he becomes more intimately familiar with its benefits and drawbacks. Following a substantial investment in a new car, a university for an education, or membership in a private social club, an individual may acquire a different perception of the product or service after gaining experience with it.

Consumption decisions are frequently influenced by external sources, including market sources and personal sources. As individuals search for information that will either facilitate evaluation of alternatives leading to choice, or facilitate post-purchase evaluation of the alternative chosen, their perceptions may be colored by the opinions and input of others. While prior social influence research has focused principally on the initial purchase decision (information search, alternative evaluation, trial/purchase), little work has investigated the lasting influence of others on post-purchase evaluations of that decision. With respect to post-purchase evaluations, what differences in attitudes toward the product can be expected between individuals who make a relatively autonomous purchase decision and those whose initial purchase decision was heavily influenced by family or friends?

Social influence vs. Self-Determination

To persuade individuals to purchase their product or service, marketers frequently attempt to take advantage of social influences in personal selling, advertising and other promotional efforts. Using the opinions of others may provide an effective avenue to influence choice. Yet, self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 1980) suggests that individuals are likely to ultimately be less satisfied when others direct brand choices. Borrowing theory from the growing stream of research regarding self-determination in the psychology literature, we contrast brand attitudes toward a given purchase between those who make brand choices influenced by family or peers and those whose decisions are more self-determined.

Specifically, in Study 1, we observe differences in attitudes toward a service currently being consumed by individuals who have recently made the purchase decision and those whose initial decision is less recent, contending that those whose initial decisions were largely determined by peers or family members are likely to have less positive post-purchase brand attitudes than will those whose initial decision was made with more autonomy.

Functional vs. Hedonic Consumption Purpose

In Study 2, we extend our examination of the role of initial peer and family influence in determining brand attitudes after purchase, while also accounting for the functional or hedonic purpose of the purchase. The functional/hedonic consumption context may affect the manner by which individuals evaluate the decision (O'Curry and Strahilevitz 2001). The interaction between consumption purpose (functional/hedonic) and social influence on brand attitudes has yet to be examined. For reasons of self-esteem and attributions made to protect one's self-esteem, we expect to find that individuals who make relatively autonomous purchase decisions (viz., with less social influence) for hedonic consumption purposes to hold more positive brand attitudes than individuals who make socially (family or peer) influenced purchase decisions for utilitarian consumption purposes.

Importance of Research

This research is important for three reasons. First, from a theoretical perspective, research related to post-purchase attitudes has focused on individual differences (e.g., involvement, Richins and Bloch 1986, 1991), and/or processes (e.g., need for cognition, Cacioppo, Petty, Kao and Rodriguez 1986) that may influence attitude consistency or dissonance, but has not examined the role of social influence. Although the role of social influence in brand preference and choice behavior is well established, little has been done to examine differential effects of social influence on post-purchase attitudes. Second, from a pedagogical perspective, this is critical since treatments of social influence in the marketing literature, particularly consumer behavior and marketing management texts, typically assign no valence to using social influence as a means to complete marketing exchanges. The use of social persuasion in personal selling (e.g., Cialdini 1994), advertising (e.g., Kamins, Brand, Stuart & Moe 1989), and brand choice (e.g., Rosen & Olshavsky 1987) is treated as an avenue of motivation with little risk of dangerous detours in route to building brand preference.

Third, from a marketing management perspective, post-purchase brand attitude is directly linked to repeat purchases of a brand. Consequently, situations or factors that might lead to an initial satisfactory transaction (i.e., via social influence on an individual's brand choice) but that also lead to deleterious effects on long term brand attitude are apt to be of concern to marketing managers. Specifically, personal sales approaches that use peer or family reinforcement to influence an individual's purchase of a minivan for its utilitarian benefits may lead the individual to subsequently hold a less positive attitude toward the brand purchased than that held by an individual who perceives that he autonomously purchased a minivan for the same utilitarian purpose.

For publicly consumed products or services, we compare the perceptions of individuals who make relatively autonomous decisions versus those who make decisions highly influenced by peers or family. While we expect that decisions reinforced by family or

friends to produce initially relatively positive attitudes toward the product chosen, we expect that individuals who make more autonomous decisions to hold more positive attitudes toward the product in post-purchase evaluations than those who made the decision more so due to social influence. We first examine these relationships within the context of an individual's decision to attend a specific university. We extend the analysis to the purchase of an automobile in Study 2.

STUDY 1

Attributions & Self-Determination

Attributions. Brand attitude research has long held that social norms are likely to influence purchase intentions and choice. Individuals may comply with the advice of others due to either normative or informational social influences. In the initial decision-making process for publicly consumed products, individuals make purchases that will provide social approval or negate disapproval (normative) or that are in agreement with others considered knowledgeable about the product category (informational). After the initial purchase, however, the user of the product gains information about the product that may or may not be in agreement with the normative and/or informational influence received at the point of purchase. To the extent that post-purchase dissonance occurs, an individual may attribute the difference between post-purchase attitude and purchase attitude to the influence of others who influenced the decision (i.e., Weiner 1986, 2000). Any notable shortcomings can be attributed to others in order to protect one's self-esteem ("I knew I shouldn't have listened to them. If I had done what I wanted I would have bought something else."). In the case of product or service failure, we can expect that those highly influenced by others to purchase a brand may hold less positive brand attitudes when compared to those who make more autonomous decisions, as we now explain.

For self-esteem reasons, individuals who make more autonomous or self-determined decisions are motivated to maintain relatively consistent and positive purchase and post-purchase attitudes—even when product failure occurs. An individual who autonomously gathers information and decides to purchase a vacation package has only himself to blame if negative results occur. Rather than admitting a bad decision, for ego-defense reasons, people will seek to maintain a relatively positive attitude toward the purchase ("It really wasn't such a bad cruise. It was fun spending an extra day in port."). Anecdotal evidence suggests that this phenomenon frequently occurs in marital contexts when one independently makes what would otherwise appear to be a bad decision.

Self-determination. Self-determination theory holds that individuals have an innate need for autonomy, competence, and relevance (Deci and Ryan 2000). Sheldon, et.al. (2001) finds that these three aspects of self-determination (autonomy, competence and relevance) are the most salient needs (compared to other fundamental needs) in determining an individual's "most satisfying events." An individual will be most satisfied when s/he autonomously (rather than jointly) makes a good purchase decision, as it reinforces feelings of competence and personal relevance. In short, we are most satisfied when we get to determine the outcome of an event. Conversely, having to seek or wait upon another's input or acquiescence may take some satisfaction out of what might otherwise be a relatively enjoyable purchase occasion.

Although social reinforcement of a purchase may lead to an initially high brand attitude, one can expect that in the post purchase evaluation stage individuals will have a more positive attitude toward a product purchase when they have not been swayed by family or peer influence to select a particular brand. Based upon

self-determination theory and attribution theory, we expect this effect to be most prominent after the passing of time, as the newness and accompanying purchase arousal wears off. Individuals begin with relatively positive brand attitudes at the point of purchase—or else they wouldn't be making the purchase. Over time, variance in brand attitudes is likely to increase as some individuals have positive and some have negative post-purchase outcomes.

Thus, it is anticipated that individuals who have made recent purchases of a given product are likely to have more favorable brand attitudes than those whose purchase decisions are more distant. However, brand attitudes of those individuals who report that decisions were heavily influenced by family or peers are expected to be significantly lower as time passes, compared to those who report that initial purchase decisions were subject to less social influence. Hence, a time (recent/distant) X social influence (low/high) should obtain. Formally:

- H1: Individuals whose purchase is more recent will have more positive brand attitudes than those whose purchase is more distant.
- H2: For more distant purchases, brand attitudes of individuals who report that the purchase decision was subject to high social influence will deteriorate more so than those who report little social influence.

Methodology

Data were collected from subjects as part of a university's annual student evaluation process at a medium-sized southern university. Overall, 419 freshmen and sophomores responded. Respondents were asked via a 5-point Likert scale (Disagree/Agree) the extent to which his/her decision to attend the university was due to family and friends ("I chose to attend *this university* because of my family." "I chose to attend *this university* because of my friends."). The reliability of single-item scales has been found to favorably compare with the use of multiple-item scales (Wanous, Reichers and Hudy 1997) when measuring constructs that are likely to be unambiguous to the respondent. Multiple-item scales are desirable for measuring more complex, multi-faceted constructs such as personality traits, attitudes and image perceptions.

Given the focus of this study, students' attitude toward the university was measured via a 13-item standardized university image scale (source: University of Texas; <http://www.utexas.edu/student/research/>) employing six-point semantic differentials ($\alpha=.909$):

Academically lax—	Services are unavailable—
Academically rigorous	Services are accessible
Impersonal—Friendly	Prejudiced—Tolerant
Bureaucratic—Streamlined	No sense of community—
	Great sense of community
Hostile—Caring	Arbitrary—Fair
Intellectually stifling—	Unrewarding—Rewarding
Intellectually stimulating	
Culturally stagnant—	Limited learning opportunities
Culturally enriching	—Variety of learning
	opportunities
Miserable—Enjoyable	

Summing the scores of the 13 items, student responses on this scale could range from 13 to 78. Subjects who intended to remain at the

TABLE 1
Results of Study 1 (N=242)

2-Way Interaction (F=5.17, p=.02, e ² =.042)	Low family influence	High family influence
Year One	65.2	67.7
Year Two	62.0	63.4
2-Way Interaction (F=6.30, p=.01, e ² =.018)	Low peer influence	High peer influence
Year One	67.1	65.7
Year Two	63.4	61.0
Main Effect		
	Low	High
Time since purchase (F=5.83, p=.02, e ² =.029)	66.7	62.6

university have significantly ($F=5.48, p=.005$) more positive attitudes toward the university (64.5) than do those who reported an intention to transfer (61.3) or were uncertain (61.7).

Since we are interested in examining those who have either high or low social influence, subjects who reported ambiguous social influences (e.g., "neutral" on the 5-point Likert scales) were removed. Thus, individuals reporting either low family or peer influence (e.g., "Strongly disagree," "Disagree") or high family or peer influence (e.g., "Agree," "Strongly Agree") were retained for analysis.

Observed differences in attitudes toward the service (university) over time between subjects may be due, in part, to factors not accounted for in this study. Further, we are relying upon respondents' reports of the degree of family or peer influence after the fact, rather than observing it at the point of purchase. *However, whether due to reality or selective/distorted perception, we are interested in the attributions and self-esteem maintenance processes individuals may employ in post-purchase evaluations.*

Results

Table 1 displays the analysis of variance results from Study 1. The dependent variable is the respondent's attitude toward the university. A 2 (year 1 vs. year 2) X 2 (low/high family influence) X 2 (low/high peer influence) three-factor design was employed in which the time since entering the university was a between-subjects factor and family and peer influences are within-subjects factors.

Main effects. As expected, subjects who recently entered the university (freshmen) have significantly more positive attitudes toward the university than do second-year students (66.7 vs. 62.6, $F=5.83, p=.02$), supporting H1.

While not explicitly hypothesized, additional main effects emerge from this data. Individuals who reported that their families strongly influenced their decision to attend this university had significantly more positive attitudes toward the university than did those whose families did not exert much influence on their decision to attend (64.7 vs. 62.5, $F=6.56, p=.01$). Individuals who were strongly influenced by their peers to attend the university had somewhat less positive attitudes toward the university than did those for whom peers had little influence (64.2 vs. 62.0, $F=3.53, p=.06$).

Interactions. As anticipated, a two-way interaction emerged with subjects' attitude toward the university between low/high family influence and recent/distant time passage since purchase

decision ($F=5.17, p=.02$), supporting H2. The interaction appears to be driven by the relatively greater drop in attitude toward the university between the first and second year by those who were heavily influenced by family members (67.7-63.4=4.3) than for those whose families did not strongly influence their initial decision to attend the university (65.2-62.0=3.2). A similar two-way interaction ($F=6.30, p=.01$) occurs for those who were heavily influenced by peers to attend the university compared to those who were not. The attitude toward the university by those who were highly influenced by peers to attend drops from year one (freshmen) to year two (sophomores) at a greater rate (65.7-61.0=4.7), than does the attitude toward the university of those who were not much influenced by peers to attend (67.1-63.4=3.7).

Interestingly, family influence plays a greater role in determining the choice of the university than did peer influence (2.93 vs. 2.67, $t_{417}=4.20, p=.000$).

Summary. The two-way interactions point to the finding that the individuals with the worst attitudes toward the university are those in their second year who reported being highly influenced by their peers to attend the university (61.0). While individuals heavily influenced to attend the university by their families have the highest initial attitude toward the university (67.7) in their first year, those in their second year who reported being heavily influenced by family members experience a substantially lower attitude (63.4), although this attitude is more positive than other second-year students whose family did not influence the choice (62.0). These numbers are not particularly surprising, given the recurring problem of student (customer) retention in this and other settings.

Given the nature of this study (between-subjects), these results mainly indicate that there is a difference between first and second year students' attitudes toward the university, and that increasingly negative attitudes are associated with individuals who initially had greater family and peer support to attend the university. Interestingly, it appears that individuals who did not attend due to peer influence have generally more positive attitudes (in year one or two) than those influenced by peers to attend. This is not the case with family influence.

A university education represents a relatively functional consumption context, although this may differ by individual and university. To the extent that the university experience was intended as more hedonic or functional might shed some light as to the relative role of family and peer influence. In the next study, we examine a different purchase context (automobile purchase) while

accounting for the purchase intent (functional/hedonic) and family/peer influence.

STUDY 2

Functional/Hedonic Context

Hedonic consumption refers to situations in which the product or service is experienced for fun, pleasure, arousal, or excitement (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). Functional products or services provide utilitarian benefits. Although some products or services may hold functional or hedonic value in the same way for most people (e.g., auto repair vs. amusement parks), the functional/hedonic nature of a given product or service may differ based on (a) individual consumption preferences and purposes, (b) situations, and (c) the role of buyer/user.

First, individual consumption preferences and purposes may differ such that one individual seeks functional rewards while another seeks hedonic rewards for the same product, as when one member of the family desires reliability, safety, and value from an automobile and another seeks speed, power, and status. Second, the consumption situation or context may lead an individual to at one time prefer functional benefits (comfortable and durable jeans) and at another time prefer hedonic benefits (fashionable, name-brand/status jeans) for a specific product. Third, individuals may assume different roles in purchase situations (e.g., computer) such that as a user one may seek more hedonic features (game ports, videogame graphics, soundcard, TV monitor compatibility, etc.), while as a buyer one may care more about functional aspects (price, repair record, etc.). Most consumption situations are unlikely to be purely functional or hedonic. Rather, individual purposes and preferences, situations, and the buyer/user role may lead an individual to seek primarily functional or hedonic benefits from the consumption experience. In sum, not all individuals will perceive a given product or service purchase as functional or hedonic. Instead, variance is likely to exist across individuals for a specific product purchase.

The functional or hedonic consumption purchase may serve to moderate the effects of family or peer influence on one's brand attitude for two reasons. First, situational purchase involvement may provide some arousal for even functional purchases. Compared to hedonic purchases, functional purchases that are dictated by family and friends may take away whatever pleasure one might derive from the shopping experience. In contrast, one's attitude toward the brand is likely to be most positive when the outcome is self-determined and when the purchase is hedonic, as when an individual makes an independent purchase of a sports car, athletic equipment, apparel, or other products/services consumed for personal pleasure. In short, in terms of brand attitude, the worst-case scenario is a functional purchase heavily influenced by friends and family and the best-case scenario is a hedonic purchase self-determined without friends or family influence. Second, in varying degrees, a shopper's self-esteem is connected to the efficacy of the shopping experience (Hanley and Wilhem 1992). In the hedonic, autonomous purchase context, the purchase is likely to be of personal importance to the individual (e.g., purchase of an expensive tennis racquet). In order to protect one's self-esteem, individuals in this context are apt to maintain a relatively positive brand attitude. Conversely, in the functional, socially-influenced purchase context, the purchase does not have high personal relevance ("It wasn't that important to me anyway.") and the buyer is able to attribute a poor decision to the influence of others ("If they hadn't told me to buy that brand, I wouldn't have.").

Thus, a three-way interaction between purpose (functional/hedonic), family influence (low/high) and peer influence (low/high) is anticipated:

- H1: Brand attitudes will be higher for hedonic purchases made with low family or peer influence than for functional purchases made with high family or peer influence.

Time Influence

As in Study 1, individuals who have made more recent purchases are expected to have more positive brand attitudes than do those whose decision is less recent. In keeping with self-determination and attribution theory, we expect that those who have made relatively independent recent purchase decisions will hold the most positive brand attitudes. Those with the poorest brand attitudes are expected to be individuals who were subject to heavy influence by family *and* friends to purchase a specific brand and where more time has passed since the purchase. Hence, a three-way interaction is expected between time (recent/distant), family influence (low/high) and peer influence (low/high). As time passes, the value of the brand opinions of others is likely to have deteriorated and any product defects attributed to *their* poor judgment.

- H2: For more distant purchases, individuals reporting that the purchase decision was subject to high social influence will have less positive brand attitudes than those reporting less social influence.

Methodology

For consistency with the sample drawn from Study 1, subjects (N=143) on a college campus who had purchased an automobile were surveyed. Respondents reported the brand of the automobile purchased, its original price, and the date (month/year) of the purchase, and whether family or friends were present at point of purchase. Subjects were asked the purpose of the automobile purchase: purely for practical purposes—purely for enjoyment (7-point semantic differential). Family influence and peer influence were each measured with items asking, "In this purchase, to what extent was your decision influenced by *family members* (friends) to buy the brand you selected?" Responses were recorded on 7-point "no influence—very much influence" scales.

Social influence validity check. The presence of family members or peers at the point of purchase increases the likelihood that individuals will report that family or peers influenced the purchase decision. Of course, the individual may disregard their input or the family members or peers may provide limited input. In general, however, we would expect that the presence of family members or peers is likely when their influence is reported. The data indicates that those who indicated that family members were present at the point of purchase reported higher family influence than those without family members present at the point of purchase (4.73 vs. 3.33; $F=3.03$, $p=.08$). Subjects who reported that friends were present at the point of purchase were more likely to report that friends influenced their brand decision than those without friends present at the point of purchase (3.32 vs. 2.21, $F=8.22$, $p=.005$).

As a second validity check on the sources of social influence, subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed (7-point Likert Scale) with the statement, "I chose this brand completely on my own." This response was negatively correlated with the extent of reported family influence ($r=-.42$, $p=.00$), but uncorrelated with peer influence ($r=.02$, $n.s.$).

Brand attitude. Attitude toward the brand was measured with an established scale developed by Maheswaran and Sternthal (1990). The seven-item scale (bad—good, outmoded—advanced, inferior—superior, not as good as competing brands—as good as competing brands, not useful—useful, a product I'll not try again—a product I'll try again, not a good value—a good value) produced acceptable reliability ($\alpha=.93$).

TABLE 2
Effects on Automobile Brand Image in Study 2 (N=143)

3-Way Interaction (F=4.40, p=.02, e ² =.03)	Low family influence	High family influence
Functional Purpose		
Low peer influence	41.1	40.3
High peer influence	40.5	34.0
Hedonic Purpose		
Low peer influence	43.3	39.5
High peer influence	39.9	41.4
	Main Effect	
	Low	High
Time since purchase (F=3.69, p=.03, e ² =.02)	43.4	38.3
	Covariate	
Price of automobile (F=17.7, p<.01, e ² =.09)	Price range: \$800-\$49,000, x = \$14,550	
3-Way Interaction (F=3.20, p=.05, e ² =.03)		
Year 1	Low family influence	High family influence
Low peer influence	45.8	41.6
High peer influence	42.7	44.0
Years 2-4		
Low peer influence	38.5	37.8
High peer influence	39.8	33.0

Results

Table 2 displays the results of the effects on brand attitude from a four-factor design utilizing a 2 (functional/hedonic) X 2 (recent/distant purchase) X 2 (low/high family influence) X 2 (low/high peer influence) ANCOVA, where the price of the vehicle purchased is the covariate. Using a median split, subjects were categorized as having a functional/hedonic purchase, low/high family influence and low/high peer influence. Since the actual purchase date of the vehicle was recorded, recent purchases were categorized as those within the past 12 months and distant purchases as those 13 months and greater. Given the likely price/quality relationship with brand attitude (e.g., \$40,000 Lexus vs. \$2000 Chevrolet), the price of the vehicle is included as a covariate control.

Main effects. As expected, subjects' brand attitudes were more positive for those who made recent purchases (43.4) than less recent purchases (38.3; F=3.69, p=.03). The price paid for the automobile, entered as a covariate, is positively related to attitude toward the brand (F=17.7, p<.01).

Interactions. As anticipated, a three-way interaction (F=4.4, p=.02) emerged between family influence (low/high), peer influence (low/high) and purpose (functional/hedonic), supporting H1 in this study. The interaction is driven primarily by the combined effects of high family influence and high peer influence on the purchase of automobiles used primarily for functional purposes, representing the poorest attitude (34.0) toward the brand of vehicle

owned. Conversely, individuals who bought vehicles primarily for hedonic purposes with little family or peer influence reported the most positive attitudes (43.3) toward the brand of car/truck that they owned.

Individuals who have negative brand attitudes are good candidates for trade-ins after their auto loan is paid off. Hence, those who keep their cars longer than four years are likely to have relatively positive brand attitudes. Consequently, a modified 2 X 2 X 2 model examining only those who made automobile purchases within the past four years reveals a three-way interaction (F=3.90, p=.05) between family influence (low/high), peer influence (low/high) and time since purchase (recent/distant). A dramatic difference exists between those who were subject to heavy family and peer influence in a recent (within past 12 months) purchase (45.8) and those whose purchase decision was more distant (13-48 months ago), but heavily influenced by family and peers (33.0).

Curvilinear analysis. Figure 1 represents the curvilinear relationship between brand attitude and time since purchase for those subjects whose last purchase was within the previous 72 months. Time since purchase is negatively related with brand attitude (t=-2.31, p=.02). The quadratic form of time since purchase is positively related to brand attitude (t=2.2, p=.03), as illustrated by the convex line in Figure 1. An interaction term (time x family x peer) is also negatively related to brand attitude (t=-2.3, p=.02). The three variables (time, time², time x family x peer) account for 11.4% of the variance in brand attitude in this regression model. Hence, brand

attitudes decrease at an increasing rate (exacerbated by the coincidence of family and peer influence) before increasing after four years from purchase.

Less variance exists in brand attitudes in the first few months following purchase within this sample, but brand attitudes become more dispersed after the first year. Thus, although subjects' initial brand attitudes are not equivalent, the data suggest that they are relatively similar (e.g., high) close to the point of purchase.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The findings of the first and second study support the premise that family and peer influence may produce relatively positive initial brand attitudes, but that in many cases time appears to *wound all heels*. That is, as time passes since the initial purchase, individuals tend to have less positive brand attitudes than do those who made recent similar purchases. The findings suggest that the shortcomings of the brand and/or the shortcomings afforded by the informational or normative social influence of family or friends are assessed over the passing of time and may lead to deteriorating brand attitudes. At the same time, individuals may be apt to attribute poor decisions to the presence or influence of others. In any case, comparing the attitudes of those heavily influenced by family and peers in a purchase decision with those who report making more independent decisions reveals more positive brand attitudes held by the latter.

Pedagogy. Treatments of social influence in marketing literature, particularly consumer behavior and marketing management texts, typically assign no valence to using social influence as a means to complete marketing exchanges. The findings of these studies indicate that a long-term risk may exist in using this route of persuasion. In keeping with self-determination theory, the data suggest that the brand is most likely to be enhanced in the mind of an individual when s/he believes the purchase decision was made based on his or her own will and competency. From a relationship marketing standpoint, the seller's appeal to one's family or peers to influence or reinforce a purchase decision could potentially harm the relationship. Given that brand attitude is strongly related to purchase behavior, a weakened brand attitude will lead to a weaker seller-buyer relationship.

Buying cycle and post-purchase attitudes. The relationship between passing of time since purchase and brand attitude found in Study 2 offers interesting context-specific implications. As Figure 1 shows, $time^2$ intersects $time$ just after 48 months, or at the time when a typical car loan expires. Buyers' brand attitudes appear to decline up until the point of deciding if they are going to get a new car or not after paying off their loan. This data shows that those who have kept their cars beyond 48 months have more positive brand attitudes than those whose car purchases were within the past 12-48 months, and begin to approach the level of brand attitudes of those whose purchases were made within the past 12 months. An obvious explanation for the curvilinear effect seen here is that those who decide to keep their vehicle beyond 4 years are those who have maintained relatively positive attitudes. Alternately, some individuals may conclude that they cannot afford (or prefer not) to purchase a new vehicle and then compensate to reduce cognitive tension by upgrading their opinion of the vehicle they are still driving ("This car isn't so bad after all. At least it's paid for.").

From a broader perspective, marketers must recognize the typical customer buying cycle for a product/service and seek to build brand equity that will lead to repatronage during that time. Information systems that collect customer-specific data regarding purchase decision criteria to be used in follow-up marketing communications to (a) reinforce key product/service characteristics and (b) determine quality expectation gaps in need of remedy would be

an avenue of maintaining positive brand attitudes. For those individuals who were heavily influenced by family and friends to make a purchase, follow-up communications that seek to convert the buyer may be necessary to achieve repatronage. From a segmentation standpoint, it may be useful for sellers to recognize that a segment of their current customers (if brand selection was heavily influenced by family and friends) may have attitudes more similar to non-customers.

Functional vs. Hedonic Selling Contexts. The findings of the second study indicate that the selling situation may dictate the most effective means to building and keeping brand preference. High family and peer influence in the more hedonic purchase resulted in a relatively high brand attitude (41.4) compared to high family and peer influence for a more functional purchase (34.0). Interestingly, those who make functional brand choices influenced by family or friends have nominally lower brand attitudes (40.3 and 40.5, respectively) than that held by those who report being influenced by neither family nor friends. The same pattern is seen in the 3-way interaction with time, family, and peer influence. Thus, it may be that such purchases represent brand selections that were meant to please family and friends, but that ultimately please no one—or at least not the buyer. Brand choices meant to please one group (family or friends) may produce less conflict and relatively less internal conflict.

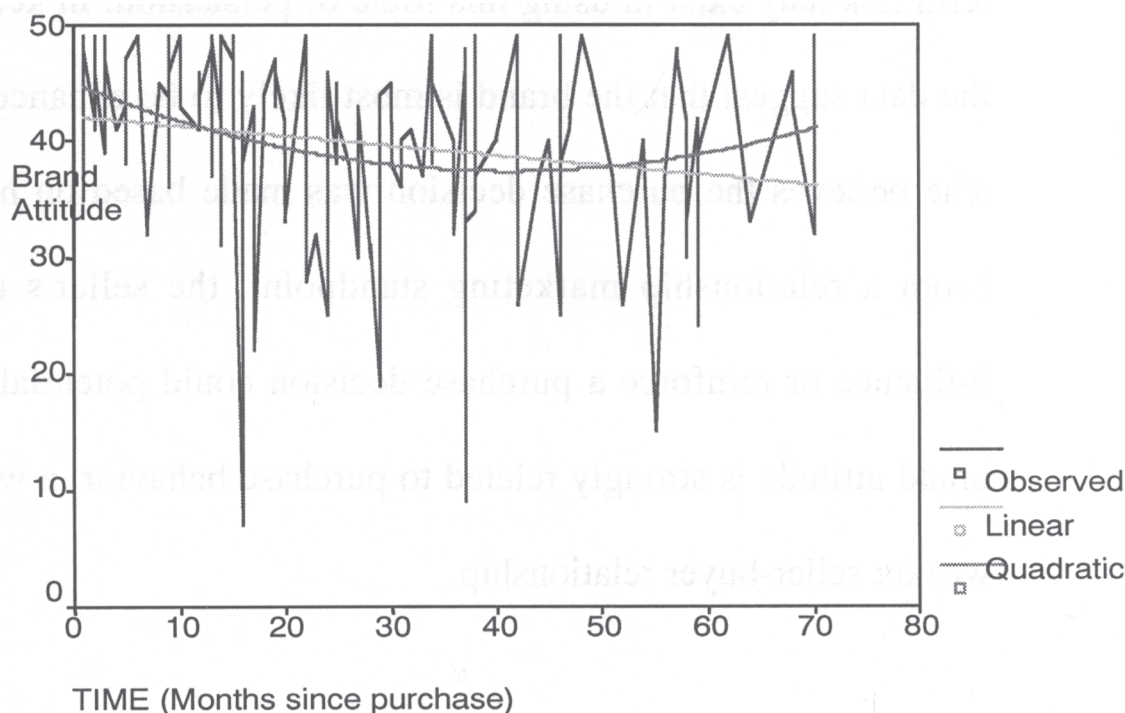
In general, sellers of functional products and services may do best to steer the individual to choices that s/he personally prefers, with less deference to family and friends. Appeals relative to "this [car] has what you wanted" and "you've made a good choice" rather than "others will approve" and "your spouse and kids will like it" are apt to generate stronger brand attitudes since they enhance feelings of autonomy and competency.

Reframing purchase decisions. In Study 2, those who made hedonic purchases and reported little influence by family or friends hold the most positive brand attitudes. Some purchases may be more functional than hedonic for most individuals (e.g., oil change). Yet, in more ambiguous person/product/situations, persuasive attempts to frame the decision for the individual to independently recognize hedonic benefits ("This family sedan has 282 horsepower and goes 0-60 in 6.8 seconds.") in what might otherwise be a more functional purchase may lead to more positive brand attitudes. Further, even in the most functional of purchases, the purchase context may be repositioned to offer hedonic benefits that help maintain brand attitudes (viz., O'Curry and Strahilevitz 2001). An express lube operator may offer spacious waiting areas with comfortable chairs, television, and quality snacks while customers get their oil change that makes the visit pleasant to the individual, even if the individual is carrying out the functional purchase under the influence of his/her spouse. In sum, generating hedonic brand benefits to the individual buyer is likely to result in relatively lasting, positive brand attitudes.

Limitations and Future Research

We relied upon individuals' reports of social influence at the initial purchase, inferring attribution behavior in a between-subjects design. The subjects were primarily young (under 30 years old) and within a single region or subculture, such that we are unable to extrapolate these findings across age groups and cultures. Within-subjects extensions of this research would benefit from a longitudinal design across a wider typology of subjects. Gathering brand attitude data at the point of purchase would provide a benchmark to measure deviations from initial brand attitudes over time. Examining the role of social influence in other sample frames covering a broader cross-section of individuals (viz., age, culture, gender, etc.) would aid in the generalizability of these results.

FIGURE 1
The relationship between time and brand attitude



Future research examining the role of group influences (e.g., identification) may offer insight into social situations where that influence helps to maintain brand attitudes over time. Research that compares and contrasts the role of different sources of social influence (informational, normative, group identification) for different product purchases (e.g., functional/hedonic) may shed light on appropriate methods of persuasion in different contexts.

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Creativity and Innovation: Consumer Research and Scenario Building

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INTRODUCTION

If you want innovation... "Never ask the customer what they want!" That is Rule #1 at Ziba (2002), a multi-disciplinary product development firm. Many people don't know what they want and are poor reporters of their own behavior. According to Ziba, they usually want what their neighbor has. Sherry (1995) also states that much consumer behavior is habit and consumers don't think to tell you about it. Zaltman (2002) discusses the need to get at what "people don't know they don't know." And, especially with regard to innovation, consumers may not know what is possible. Many types of innovation may not even be within their frame of reference. So how do we use consumer research to understand the consumer without asking them directly? And then, how do we use the research to generate innovative ideas for consumer experience?

Creativity and innovation are necessities in today's Era of Consumer Experience. Consumers are seeking experience and use this to differentiate between the products that they chose. Tom Peters (Hirasuna, O'Leary and Lawrence 2000), among others, sees the present as the Era of Consumer Experience. He says that quality has been commoditized and no longer serves to differentiate products. Consumer experience now serves that function.

In today's marketplace, designing consumer experiences has become a common and critical challenge for researchers and development teams in all types of markets and industries. Like never before, it has become vital to connect with consumers in significant and memorable ways. "Recognizing experiences as a distinct economic offering," note Joseph Pine and James Gilmore, authors of *The Experience Economy* (1999), "provides the key to future economic growth," which they define as an offering that focuses on engaging individual consumers in unique, personal and memorable ways (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Citing examples like Disney, the contemporary "coffee experience," and staged birthday parties, Pine and Gilmore assert that experience has become a major source of economic value in the new economy. "Experience," they note, "represents an existing but previously unarticulated genre of economic output. Decoupling experiences from services in accounting for what businesses create opens up possibilities for extraordinary economic expansion—just as recognizing services as a distinct and legitimate offering led to a vibrant economic foundation in the face of a declining industrial base" (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p. x).

To be able to innovate and develop products that lead to the fulfilling, compelling experiences for consumers, we need to have a deep, holistic and contextual understanding of the consumer. This paper addresses the question: how do we generate innovative, creative, impactful ideas for new product experiences for consumers? There is a paucity of consumer research on creativity and innovation and on using consumer research descriptively and then generatively to produce creative, innovative ideas for consumer experience. This paper presents one consumer research method that does this.

One of the authors of this paper observed and interviewed people in very creative organizations (IDEO, Hewlett Packard, Ziba, GVO, Patagonia, 3Com, Fish, Idea Factory, etc.), observing ways that they generate ideas and design products and services that create consumer experiences. A couple of themes pertinent to this paper were repeated numerous times. First, there is a whole group of people doing innovative consumer research that has not been

well represented in the consumer research literature—industrial designers. Second most of these creative firms are expert and creative at ethnographic consumer research. And third, storytelling/scenario building was extensively used. Through scenarios, the character (consumer) lives and we have a deep understanding of the consumer's activities, needs and expectations. It also enables us to identify opportunities and visualize new and innovative consumer experience ideas. Dorothy Leonard (1997) talks about this as "empathic design" in her *Harvard Business Review* article.

Ethnographic methods and frameworks provide a way to both understand (*describe*) the consumer and *generate* ideas. Ethnographic methods fit particularly well with experience (thick description, contextual) and also with idea generation. There is also increasing discussion in the literature of storytelling and scenario building (c.f. Denning 2001, Kotter 1996, Nakamae 1999, Swap et al 2001, Boyce 1996). Suri and Marsh (2000) define scenario building as "... the development of a series of alternative fictional portrayals—stories—involving specific characters, events, products and environments, which allow us to explore product ideas or issues in the context of a realistic future" (152).

The objective of this paper is to present and utilize an ethnographic consumer research framework developed by Rothstein (2002, 2001) and user centered consumer research of teens (Anderson 2002) that will creatively and innovatively build scenarios that lead to a deep understanding of consumers (*descriptive*) and scenarios that are *generative/prescriptive* of new ideas for new product experiences for these consumers. This method's focus is on extending ethnography; including its descriptive aspect and then moving to its generative aspects. It is one answer to the question, how do we generate ideas for new products for consumers. Tangently, ethnographic research has always been an analysis challenge. This method provides a way to meet that challenge by organizing and relating the messy data that results from ethnographic work.

A (X 4): A METHOD FOR UNDERSTANDING, EXPLORING AND DESIGNING EXPERIENCE

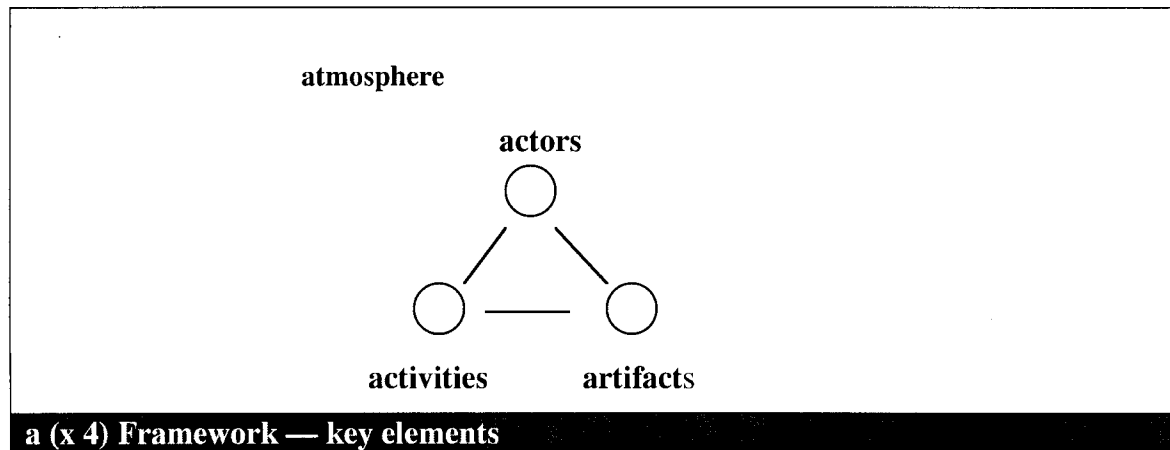
We need to look at our business as more than simply the building and selling of personal computers (that is, goods). Our business is the delivery of information (that is, services) and lifelike interactive experiences."

Andrew Grove, Intel Chairman (1996)

The next section presents a new method for researching, exploring and communicating scenarios about new consumer experiences. Called *a (x 4)*, the method is structured around the four key factors—actors, activities, artifacts and atmosphere—that animate experiences with new products, communications, environments and services. By closely examining the interaction of these factors, researchers and development teams can gain insight and inspiration for the development of new consumer experiences (Figure 1).

a (x 4) borrows and combines strategies and techniques typically found in consumer research, ethnography and design. As a multipurpose and multidisciplinary framework, it is used as a tool for data collection (i.e., consumer research), analysis and scenario-building. It features four phases:

FIGURE 1



Facts & Observations

During this phase, *a(x4)* is used like an ethnographic coding scheme to collect contextual information about consumers and their everyday experiences. The immersion in field work has been clearly identified by many experts as critical in the scenario-building process (e.g., Suri and Marsh 2000; Couch, Sanders and Welker 1997; Ireland and Johnson 1995). The *Facts and Observations* that researchers collect result in a robust, targeted and highly useful ‘information database’ about the actors, activities, atmosphere and artifacts that relate to a project or study (Figure 2).

Snapshots

With an ‘information database’ established, *a(x4)* is next used to create sets of *Snapshots* (organized according to the four factors) to illustrate and communicate key insights, relationships and conclusions. The *Snapshots* involve summarizing essential information gleaned from field studies and often includes highly visual representations using photos, video, drawings and diagrams. As a semi-structured visual exercise that intentionally taps into intuition and imagination, the *Snapshots* compel researchers and development teams to focus on communicating information that relates directly to the key factors that influence new experiences. These are the *descriptive scenarios*.

Visualizations

The third phase involves using the four key factors to create a highly visual, speculative image (or set of images) about a proposed consumer experience. *Visualizations* are fundamentally a precursor to more specific and defined scenarios. This preparatory step is important because it helps researchers and designers remain free from project-specific constraints and limitations which, if imposed too early, tend to stifle and suffocate innovation and creativity.

Scenarios

With all of the previous phases completed, detailed *prescriptive scenarios* about new consumer experiences can be developed. The development team proceeds with substantial knowledge about actors, activities, artifacts and the context (i.e., atmosphere) in which these all interact. The form of the scenarios varies greatly, including: text-based narratives, storyboards, play-acting and, increasingly, highly effective multimedia videos.

Thus, the *a(x4)* demonstrates how a combination of ethnographic approaches and creative exercises can be used to generate ‘real-world’ data and fuel speculations about the future of consumer experiences (Figure 3).

TEEN CASE

This research utilizes the user-centered methodologies of photo essays, metaphor development, textual and collage analysis to gain an understanding of teens (Gen Nets) and their computers. These methods are used to get at what teens “don’t know they know.” The focus is on the descriptive and generative scenarios created while using the *a(x4)* framework and including actors, activities, artifacts and atmosphere data.

At their peak, this Gen Net group will exceed the number of baby boomers (Tapscott 2000). They are important for us to understand. This research aims to add to that understanding by seeking to understand at a level that these teens may not be aware. According to Jerry Zaltman (2002), “A lot goes on in our minds that we’re not aware of...Most of what influences what we say and do occurs below the level of awareness. That’s why we need new techniques: to get at hidden knowledge—to get at what people don’t know they know.”

This data is used here to first illustrate the development of descriptive scenarios. Analysis of the data from this research reveals different groups of teens (Anderson 2002). Utilizing Rothstein’s *a(x4)* framework, data from one of the groups of teens is analyzed and used to develop descriptive and then *generative scenarios*. The data will be examined using the four components: actor, atmosphere, activities and artifacts. The *a(x4)* phases of facts and observations, snapshots, visualization and synthesis are followed.

Research

The research was conducted in collaboration with eighth grade Language Arts teachers in middle school. The concept of metaphor was taught in the teens’ Language Art classes. Then the teens were asked to develop a metaphor for their computer, create a collage that depicts their metaphor, and describe this metaphor. They were also asked to write a “wish list” that completes the sentence... “I wish my computer could...” And lastly, they constructed photo essays that showed what their computer meant to them. There were 150 teen participants in this user-centered research.

Snapshots

Analysis of the data found different groups of teens. The data from one of these groups will be utilized in the subsequent phases. The snapshot phase provides a thick description (Geertz 1973) of the group studied. A *Snapshot* is effective in analyzing the collected data. *Snapshots* involve organizing, summarizing and communi-

FIGURE 2

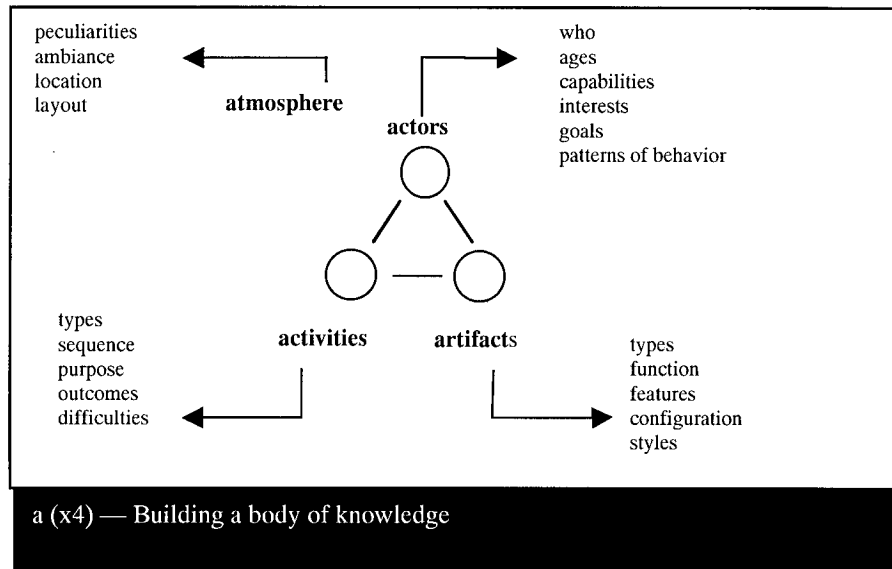


FIGURE 3

Dimension	descriptive (present)		prescriptive (future)
a(x4) scenarios	facts and observations	snapshots	visualizations
Process	research →	analysis →	synthesis →

cating data that has been obtained about the four key elements: actors, artifacts, activities and atmosphere.

Data from the metaphors, wish lists and photographs from the teens in this group (which we later called Toolman) was employed in this phase. In the Toolman group, the participants used the following metaphors for their computer among others: bookshelf, scrapbook, mothers, parents, diary, toy box, dog, friends, food, ant hills, malls, flashlight, superman, teacher, etc.

The following are a few illustrative examples of the paragraphs written by the teens describing their metaphors:

“There are lots of things computers can be described as. A metaphor for my computer is, computers are malls. They’ve got so much in common. They’re both places where you can relax, shop and talk. Both are great inventions. Why do you think malls and computers are alike? Both are places where you can relax. You relax in malls by walking around and relax by sitting and typing on the computer. You

can shop both at the mall and on the computer logging on to store websites or visiting the stores at the mall. Talking is a major part of shopping with friends and talking online for fun. Can you think of any more reasons why malls are computer?”

“My computer is my parents. They both make me look good. They make all my papers look professional. They correct my spelling, check my grammar, and keep things neatly filed. Both my parents and my computer introduce me to new people from different places. My computer and my parents give me interesting facts on many different cultures. They guide me when I am trying something new, or installing something new. My computer is a parent because it is never too busy when I need help, unless someone else is using the computer or my sister is bugging my parents.”

“My computer and my parents also try to make things as easy as possible for me and don’t try to overwhelm me. They can

both entertain me when I am bored, and neither one will ever turn its back on me. My parents are getting older, and so is my computer as technology improves. My computer and my parents are always teaching me new things. The one bad thing my computer and my parents have in common is that they can both give me a headache after awhile. Those are some of the things I can think of that my computer and my parents have in common.”

“My computer is Superman because of all the great things that they can do! First of all Superman can fly, shoot laser out of his eyes, has super strength, and great intelligence. I believe that these traits compare with what my computer can do...almost! What is so great about my computer? Let me tell you what my computer can do and how much it rally means to me.

Alright, so like I said, my computer is Superman, well it does a lot of awesome things that I think compare with the good deeds that Superman does. For example, my computer allows me to talk to people using the Internet. I can type essays with it like I'm doing now. On my computer, I can play music, not to mention also playing DVD's and video games! That equals five different reasons that I love my computer. In my opinion, that's enough reasons that my computer is just as great as Superman, in fact, it is Superman!”

“I said that my computer was a tool. This was my metaphor because my computer helps me do all sorts of things. My computer lets me go places in the internet. I can check my email so I can keep in touch with my friends that don't live in Arizona.

I can play games on my computer to keep me busy when I'm bored. I can do reports by typing on my computer to make it look more nice. For my reports I can also get research off the internet. It also helps me if I can't buy something at stores I can go to the stores website and order it. Basically if I didn't have a computer things would be harder, like school and socially it would be harder.”

The Snapshots phase involves descriptions of the patterns of each of the $a(x4)$ factors. For this Toolman group we found the following:

With regard to the *atmosphere* or context most of the students had computers in their bedrooms. They had the computer on in the background almost all of the time that they were in their rooms. Music was also often on. And frequently friends were there. Most often one was on the computer and one playing video games. For some, less than the above context, the computer was in a public area of the house, most often the family room. This area was not as private. And the computer was then frequently seen as an intrusion with other activities going on—television, talking, meals, etc. And more often in this case, more people were vying for the use of the computer, which created more tension.

The *actors* in this research were a group of 13–14 year old teenagers. They were middle school students taking Language Arts (a required subject). They lived in a city in southwestern United States. They saw and used their computers in a positive, very functional way. (As illustrated by the metaphors above and the description of activities below). There were sometimes other actors in their environments. They frequently had friends around using their computers. And there were sometimes family members around. This group did not talk about the presence of family members as much as other groups who often saw family members as a source of

tension with regard to the computer. This group saw the computer as helpful and positive.

The teens in this group are the multitaskers. One of the main computer *activities* that this group was involved in was communicating, mainly through instant messaging. In fact, in most cases, the computer was on in the background most of the time that the students were home. They were also heavily involved in shopping, learning, researching, entertaining games, and word processing activities. This functional use of the computer led to the title for this group, Toolman.

In the most common context of the teen's bedroom, the most frequent *artifacts* that existed were a table or desk for the computer, chair, television, video game equipment, stereo, CD's, disks, book bags and beds (on which the teen or friends were often lying) (Figure 4).

Visualization

Visualization starts the generative, prescriptive phase. The third part of $a(x4)$ involves speculating about the future of user experience by creating a highly descriptive image or set of images. Created before the development of more specific and highly defined scenarios and concepts, *Visualizations* help individuals and groups break free from overly restrictive constraints and limitations. If done properly, *Visualizations* create a broad, somewhat abstract image from which specific scenarios and concepts about user experience can later be constructed. The importance of this step should not be underestimated. As noted by Bill Moggridge (1993), effective scenario-building is based on a willingness to suspend real world concerns, free from constraints that often limit creativity.

In this Toolman teen case, we have a multitasking, heavy communicator where the computer is a constant part of their life. Interaction with their friends also is much of a constant, either in person or over the computer. With the computer there is always an open communication channel that is on. Additionally there are other major activities going on at the same time ranging from school work and learning to entertainment to shopping. It is easy to envision that, in addition to communicating, these teens become very accustomed to the constant access to the other functions of the computer. And that as they are multitasking, their friends are often a part of all their other activities. These other activities become more collaborative—either in person or virtually through the computer. So their friends also become more of a constant and are involved in their video games (witness the virtual playing of video games with participants from all over the world), school work, shopping, learning, etc. at any time that the teen is involved in these activities. The computer provides the opportunity for this activity to happen in a more constant and a more visual mode than in the past. These teens become more visual thinkers because of this constant access.

Scenarios

With the previous steps completed, specific and detailed scenarios about user experience can be developed. Researchers and designers start this activity with considerable knowledge and insight about actors, activities, artifacts and the context (atmosphere) in which these all interact. They will have conducted field research, created detailed profiles or *Snapshots*, and developed a visionary, speculative image (or set of images) about a new experience. The form of the scenario can vary greatly depending on circumstances, time constraints and/or other needs and expectations. Common types include: written stories, illustrated stories, comics, storyboards, plays and, increasingly, multimedia productions.

FIGURE 4

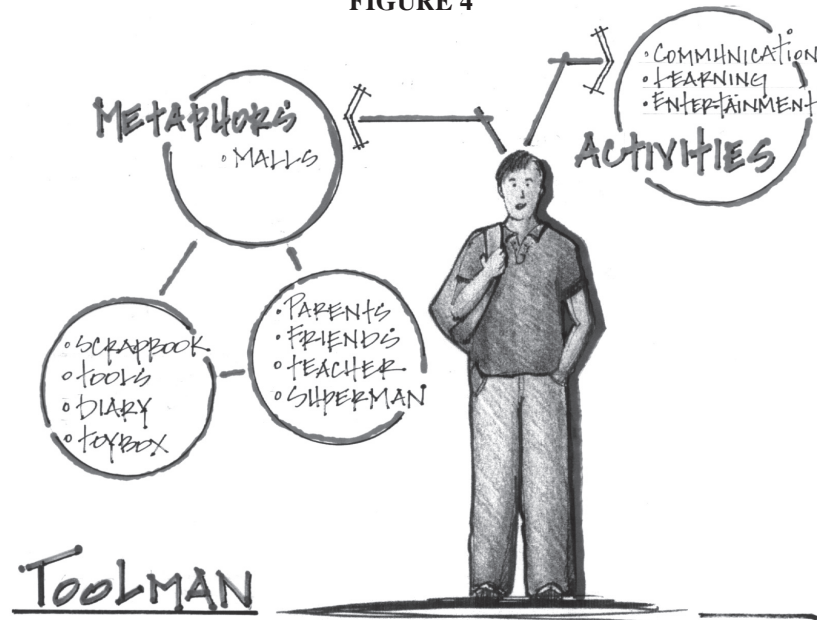
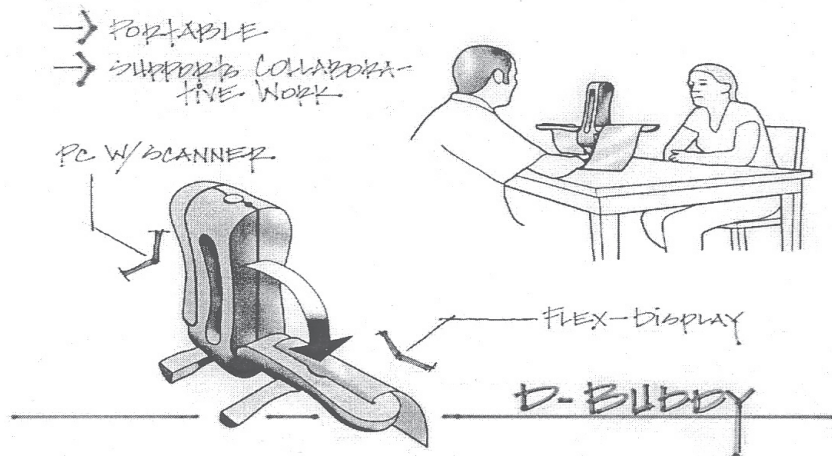


FIGURE 5



For the teen Toolman group, a new computer product (adapted from a concept originally developed by Ryan Brown, a 2002 graduate of Arizona State University's product design program) might be envisioned to support experiences like learning, collaboration with friends, visual communication with friends and mobility—all of great importance to this teen consumer group. As such, the product concept might feature a portable, lightweight PC with an integrated scanner and removable flexible displays. For the Toolman user group, a computer like this would allow them to learn, create and collaborate with friends in a wide variety of environments and circumstances. It would be easy to take this PC with them. The mobility of the product allows the teen the access that they have become accustomed to with the multiple functions of the computer. Also, the scanner and visual displays are highly compatible with the

visual thinkers that these Toolman teens have become. This PC is the mobile tool that allows the teens constant access to the many different functions of the computer, most especially those that increase visual capabilities (Figure 5).

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Delight-As-Magic: Refining the Conceptual Domain of Customer Delight

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores consumers' experience of delight and investigates the role of surprise in this process. These questions are examined through an interpretation of five consumers' own accounts of delight in the context of travel experiences, informed by literature from the fields of psychology, aesthetics, and consumer research. The exercise contributes to our understanding of customer delight by identifying two distinct modes of delight: delight-as-pleasant-surprise and delight-as-magic. Delight-as-magic refers to the effertent emotional arousal individuals derive from consumption experiences they imbue with a subjective, symbolic meaning associated with themes of interpersonal warmth, aesthetic experiences, or leisure experiences.

"What is man before beauty cajoles from him a delight in things for their own sake, or the serenity of form tempers the savagery of life?"—Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller

Customer delight has gained considerable popularity among marketing practitioners in the last decade and has more recently attracted the attention of marketing researchers. Deming (1986) introduced the concept of customer delight as the true source of competitive advantage in an era where customer satisfaction has become a competitive necessity. Consultants and managers rapidly espoused this philosophy, and customer delight has been substituted for customer satisfaction as a strategic objective in several firms, including Eastman Kodak, National Semiconductor Corporation, AT&T, and Sun Microsystems (Chandler 1989; Hines 1995; Trader 1995). In support of this trend, research findings have indicated that customer delight may contribute to enhanced customer satisfaction, word-of-mouth communication, repurchase intentions, and more positive evaluations of brand extensions (Kumar 1996; Oliver, Rust and Varki 1997; Westbrook and Oliver 1991).

Little agreement exists, however, regarding the meaning of 'delight'. Indeed, firms that adopt a customer delight strategy interpret this concept differently to signify exceeding customer expectations, providing superior quality through the service encounter, or creating a "wow" factor by providing customers with unexpected attention and service features (Chandler 1989; Cohen 1997; Hines 1995).

Similarly, efforts by psychology and consumer researchers to define the concept of delight have yielded various conceptualizations. One conceptualization construes customer delight as extreme satisfaction, suggesting that delight occurs when customer expectations are highly exceeded (Estalami 2000; Ngobo 1999). More popular conceptualizations of delight involve various combinations of positive affect, arousal, and surprise (Oliver et al. 1997; Plutchik 1980; Russell 1980; Westbrook and Oliver 1991). Adopting a prototypical approach of emotion, a third group of researchers have depicted delight as a type of joy or happiness (Richins 1997; Shaver et al. 1987). Finally, studies eliciting consumers' own descriptions of delight have associated this emotion to feelings of excitement, effervescence, warmth, well-being, joy, exuberance, thrill, exhilaration, elation, surprise, joy, relaxation, and comfort (Davitz 1969; Kumar 1996; Menon and Dubé 1999).

Discrepancies among various conceptualizations of the construct and empirical findings suggest that certain issues remain unresolved. In particular, the role of surprise in the experience of

delight needs to be clarified. While Oliver et al. (1997) posited surprise as a necessary antecedent of delight, some empirical investigations have suggested that consumers sometimes experience delight in the absence of surprise (Kumar 1996; Oliver et al. 1997). The purpose of the present study is to explore the role of surprise in consumers' experience of delight. Specifically, the experiential dimensions of delight, the underlying meanings of those experiences, and the conditions under which delight emerges are examined through an interpretation of consumers' own accounts of delight in the context of travel experiences. The interpretation is embedded in an experiential view of consumer research (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982) and it is informed by literature in the areas of psychology, aesthetics theory, and consumer behavior.

METHOD

Study Design and Data Collection

Phenomenological interviewing (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989) was well suited to the study's discovery-oriented goal (Wells 1993) of understanding the meanings of delight for consumers. Five informants participated in a series of two interviews—averaging a total of two hours of interview per participant—in addition to a subsequent member check. Interviews, which were conducted either in the informant's home or in a University office, were recorded and subsequently transcribed.

The investigation was situated in the context of travel experiences. This context was chosen because it potentially includes consumption experiences covering a broad spectrum of consumer involvement and affective content, that is, various levels of emotional arousal (Price, Arnould, and Tierney 1995). Consequently, a broad definition of the term "travel" was adopted, as informants were encouraged to describe various activities (transportation, lodging, sight-seeing, etc.) they may have engaged in while traveling for any purpose (business, leisure, adventure, etc.).

Informants were selected purposively, to maximize the variety and richness of travel experiences. Preliminary interviews suggested that a discussion of emotions associated with traveling was more forthcoming in women. Hence, the sample consisted of five women recruited through a network of personal acquaintances and selected to represent a broad range of age, background, and travel experiences: Sarah and Christina, two 21-year-old students; Susan, a 47-year-old physical education teacher; Claire, a 57-year-old retired secretary; Elisabeth, a 62-year-old retired grade school teacher.

The first interview was designed to yield information about informants' travel history, their motives for engaging in these trips, and the emotions associated with them. This insight was important to allow the findings regarding delight to be judged in the context of informants' broader experiences and how they understood these experiences. The first interview was also intended as an evaluation of the extent to which the concept of delight emerged naturally in consumers' account of their consumption experiences. While several pleasant and joyous stories were described in these interviews, none of the informants explicitly employed the word 'delight' in relating those events. Consequently, the second interview was designed to first explicitly ask informants to identify experiences of delight while traveling, if any, and then to elicit a description of those experiences. Although the second interview was slightly

more directive, in that informants were asked about a particular type of experience, both interviews were formulated to allow informants to freely describe their experience in detail.

Finally, informants were contacted a third time to conduct member checks, a procedure that assesses the credibility of the author's interpretation against the informants' view of their experiences. Informants corrected certain minor chronological errors, but they generally found that the interpretation was interesting and reflected their own experience.

Data Analysis

The process of defining the conceptual domain of customer delight rested on the general procedures of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998). The objective of this interpretation was to identify the experiential dimensions of delight, to understand the underlying meanings of those experiences, and to gain insight into the conditions under which delight emerges. An idiographic analysis of the text transcribed from the interviews was first conducted, where the experiences of informants were considered individually. This involved a reconstruction of each informant's travel history, as well as an impressionistic reading of transcripts to identify themes emerging from informants' travel experiences. The number of delight episodes identified by each participant ranged from none at all to eight cases, for a total of twenty episodes of delight. A procedure of open coding broke these episodes down into various categories of information (e.g., physical responses to delight, related emotions, context, etc.). These experiences were then aggregated in a cross-case analysis using axial and selective coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Axial coding involved connecting the basic categories into more general conceptual classes composed of sub-categories. Selective coding then mapped relationships between the larger conceptual classes. Thus the interpretation process increasingly moved towards a more abstract level of analysis. It is important to note that this process was not linear, however, and it often entailed moving back and forth between the various coding operations as the interpretation developed. In fact, the analysis progressed through a hermeneutical process (Arnold and Fisher 1994), with successive iteration between individual experiences, emerging global themes, and the literature that informed the interpretation, with the goal of removing contradictions from the developing interpretation.

DELIGHT-AS-MAGIC: EMERGING THEMES

An analysis of the interviews revealed episodes of delight as pleasant surprise, converging with Oliver et al.'s (1997) definition of delight. However, and more importantly, a second type of delight also emerged which did not involve pleasant surprise. These episodes constitute the focus of the present analysis. In lieu of positive affect and surprise, these episodes of delight appeared to be endowed with a magical quality that eludes rationalization. In the words of one informant, these episodes consist of:

[...] little *special* moments that you kind of remember. You get a flash, sort of. You're not really sure why or how... why it's there, but... you're just delighted and that's it, I guess.-Susan

Similarly, these delight episodes were also associated with situations that informants viewed as "just right" or "perfect":

[...] and I remember telling my husband "Ah... This is just *perfect*". It was like time was standing still, also, because it was so peaceful and quiet, and we were just standing there and... I was, like, totally delighted and out of it [laughs].-Claire

The object of delight in these instances appears to possess a quintessential nature, a "rare and mysterious capacity to be just exactly what they ought to be... unequivocally right" (Cornfield and Edwards 1983, in Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989, p. 16). Indeed, Cornfield and Edwards' characterization of the pleasure quintessential objects ignite in us is reminiscent of the childlike experience of delight depicted by some informants, and suggests that this pleasure arises from the meaning bestowed upon the object: "The pleasure such things offer us is wonderful and illogical; it is very like the pure joy a child feels when he unexpectedly comes into possession of something magically desirable" (p.16).

The delight that emanates from these magical moments will be referred to as 'delight-as-magic'. Understanding the nature of delight-as-magic requires that we dissect the sources of meaning that imbue some experiences with a quintessential quality and hence renders them delightful. The interviews suggest three sources of meaning leading to episodes of delight-as-magic—interpersonal warmth, leisure experience, and aesthetic experience—which are described next.

Interpersonal Warmth

Participants recalled several delight episodes that occurred in the context of close, comfortable interpersonal interactions. Andersen and Guerrero's (1998) construct of 'interpersonal warmth' captures the essence of this context. Interpersonal warmth refers to the "pleasant, contented, intimate feeling that occurs during positive interactions with friends, family, colleagues, and romantic partners" (Andersen and Guerrero 1998, p.304). For instance, Christina's experience of delight during her trip to San Francisco was in part associated with her interactions with close high school friends ("they're all, like, on the same wave length as me"). Similarly, harmonious interactions between family members were constitutive of her experience of delight while sitting outside a restaurant in Quebec City:

Sometimes my family fights when we're on holidays but I think that that time maybe we weren't, for once [laughs]. [...] just sitting there and totally being relaxed, having no responsibilities, and being with my family and not arguing.

These findings converge with previous observations that, compared to less intimate relationships, close relationships contain significantly more positive emotions such as delight (Bersheid, Snyder, and Omato 1989).

Interpersonal warmth was also a source of delight when informants were reunited with friends or family members after being separated from some time.

I guess, like, walking into my house and, like, having the house smell, and seeing my cats, and seeing my mom and dad [...] I love them so much, and being away from them for months, even for short periods....-Laura

This experience evokes Saint Thomas Aquinas' characterization of delight as a situation where "we are not without the good we love, but are at rest in its possession" (in Drost 1995, p.47). Hence, while desire represents the movement towards an object that is loved, delight lies in the repose we find in the presence or possession of that object, so that delight "is to the emotions what coming to rest is to physical things" (in Drost 1995, p.51).

At other times, interpersonal warmth engendered delight when informants met new people with whom they felt spontaneous bonding (Andersen and Guerrero 1998). In Susan's words, this

occurs upon “meeting people with whom you... it’s just *easy*, you know... just easy communication; you almost feel as if you’ve known them forever, and you barely know them.”

While interpersonal warmth stimulates the experience of delight, its absence may inhibit the emotion. This is illustrated when comparing Christina’s delight situations characterized by interpersonal warmth—interacting with her friends in San Francisco and with her family in Quebec City—with the emotions she felt during what she described as the best memory of her trip to Helsinki. Christina spent the last evening of that trip with schoolmates and professors at a local bar located on top of a building. Although she reports feelings of happiness, delight eluded this evening, a situation in part attributable to the absence of interpersonal warmth:

People that I was with, I wouldn’t say that I’m a hundred percent comfortable with, not that I wasn’t comfortable with them but, just not like they were my friends or my family, people I’ve known for ever and ever. They became friends, but we didn’t... it’s not like they are the people that know everything about me. [...] Sometimes there were things that normally I would say, that I wouldn’t say. You’re a bit more reserved when you’re with people that you don’t... you know. You’re on a different level, kind of.—Christina

Delight in the context of interpersonal warmth is associated with both cognitive and emotional goals. Indeed, informants described these interactions as founded on mutual understanding, shared interests, easy communication, comfort and love. The concept of validation subsumes these goals, as it encompasses “experiences of understanding, acceptance and warmth” (Praeger 1995, p.47).

Leisure experience

Some delight episodes were consistent with three elements Unger and Kernan (1983) identified as characteristics of the concept of leisure: intrinsic motivation, perceived freedom, and involvement.

For the ancient Greeks, leisure (*schole*) referred to “a contemplative activity pursued for its own sake or to its own end.” (Unger and Kernan 1983, p. 382.). In this view, leisure is intrinsically motivated—an activity that is undertaken as an end in itself. Several delight episodes occurred when informants were engaged in seemingly mundane activities undertaken for no other purpose than the immediate pleasure they procured. For instance, some of Christina’s delight episodes took place as she was simply walking through the streets of Quebec City, Helsinki, or San Francisco, enjoying her surroundings, the music and activity around her, or the company of her friends. In these examples, delight stemmed from the pleasure of engaging in the activity itself and entailed a special type of involvement characterized by a spontaneous letting-be and a deep absorption in the process (Arnould and Price 1993; Unger and Kernan 1983). This observation offers insight into the case of Elisabeth, who did not report any delight episode while traveling. Indeed, while she travels, Elisabeth is entirely focused on a dominant goal of learning:

I just want to remember so much. I can’t remember half of the things that the people are telling me, and that bothers me [laughs]. Because when you go on a tour and you are traveling from A to B, the tour leader is telling you the history of everything going by, and you think “Oh, I’m gonna remember that, I’m gonna remember that”, but you don’t remember three quarters of it. It’s *really* difficult. [...] So I’m standing there,

listening, and listening, and listening, and not having time to be... bumping around [laughs]. Like I say, it’s been more of a learning experience. I go because I’m interested and I want to find out.

Hence, Elisabeth is so cognitively engaged in the situation that the level of effort and concentration she exerts in trying to learn leaves little room for spontaneous hedonic experiences to wash over her.

Unger and Kernan’s (1983) second characteristic of leisure, perceived freedom, was present in all delight episodes; informants engaged in these activities willingly and with great enthusiasm. No feelings of delight were reported during activities informants felt obliged to participate in. On some occasions, the absence of perceived freedom even detracted from the experience of delight. As explained previously, the lack of interpersonal warmth precluded feelings of delight for Christina during her last evening in Helsinki. However, the pressure to follow a schedule imposed by the group also played a role:

[...] also, we weren’t really... We were still in the, like, tourist mode, like, see this, go here... like, we were there, but then we could only stay there for a few hours and then we had to go to this bar, and then... so it wasn’t so much like I’m just sitting back and enjoying the view.

Lastly, delight episodes in the context of leisure experiences often contained a dimension of escape from external pressure or responsibility. Christina’s feelings of delight while walking in the streets of Helsinki were partly due to the fact that she was away from the stress of competition. Likewise, her delightful stroll in the streets of Quebec City took place while she was released from her responsibility as supervisor of a group of students. Sarah experiences a similar feeling every time she goes home for a brief vacation from school and from the responsibilities of living on her own:

It’s just the home, like, comfort. I’m really happy to be home and not have to worry about... your own house, cooking, things like that. It’s just like a relief, just to have that home, I guess.

This concurs with previous observations that leisure constitutes an “interlude from the ordinary” or even a “fantastic escape from reality” (Unger and Kernan 1983). Although the interviews were situated in a travel context conducive to leisure, the three characteristics of intrinsic motivation, perceived freedom, and escape from the ordinary transcend the travel context and apply to other service settings.

Aesthetic Experience

Delight was also associated with the contemplation of beauty in one’s surroundings. For Susan, beauty in nature corresponds to a very specific type of coastal landscape, which she spontaneously referred to upon recalling a number of delight episodes:

I think that probably all the moments I spend on cliffs, you know, with the wind blowing, along the ocean. I think delight is there, along the ocean. [...] It’s a really nice feeling to be out there... that feeling of, you know, openness around you. [...] It’s so beautiful! It’s just *amazingly* beautiful.

The idea that delight may emanate from the contemplation of a beautiful object—and specifically of nature as an object—was

acknowledged in Kant's aesthetic theory (Budd 1998b). Kant proposed that a person will delight in an object he or she finds beautiful, due to the existence of a certain harmony between that person's *imagination*—the perception process which transforms sensory input into a perceptual representation of the object—and his or her *understanding*—the perceptual process of assigning the object to a specific type or category of objects. For Kant, delight thus occurs when the object perceived corresponds to the object conceived, that is the object the imagination would have produced if its only aim was to please itself. Accordingly, one could posit that a person will see an object as quintessential when that person's perception of the object is isomorphic to an idealized mental imagery or schema he or she holds.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu asserted that a one's tastes are grounded in one's habitus, that is, the socially constructed system of schema a person gains through his or her upbringing, education, and experience through life (Holt 1998). The influence of Susan's habitus can be seen in the delight she felt while visiting friends in Kenya, and relishing in a certain '*art de vivre*':

[...] the house, the garden, the life you're having there... I think that was delightful as well, you know... the nice meals, she had nice things, nice cutlery, nice china, things from all over the world, you know.

Delight in aesthetic experiences thus occurs when, in the contemplation of an object, a person's perception of that object is harmonious with an idealized mental representation of that object developed through that person's socialization process and life experiences.

In some instances, informants recounted memories of stunning landscapes that left a strong impression on them, but did not elicit delight. Consider, for instance, Sarah's account of her best memory from her trip to Africa:

They took us out to the Grey Cliff Valley and we were just sitting on the edge of it and it was *amazing*, like, the view was *amazing*. It was, like, out of a movie or something. [...] I was really, like *marveled*. I don't know... I don't know what the word is, like... in *awe* that I was actually there, like, I was standing right there on a huge cliff overlooking Africa [laughs]. You could see, like, volcanoes in the distance and you could see all the villages down there, and... and feeling sick because it was so high [laughs].

Sarah's dominant emotions in this situation were awe and amazement. Kant's distinction between the beautiful and the sublime (Budd 1998a) enlightens this observation. Whereas the sentiment of beauty immerses the mind in restful and pleasurable contemplation as there is a sense of harmony between nature and our faculties, the sentiment of the sublime stimulates agitation in the mind as fear looms in an overwhelming recognition of the infinite greatness of the world. Supporting Kant's propositions, the informants' experiences suggest that delight is associated with the sentiment of beauty, while awe dominates the experience of the sublime.

Finally, several accounts of delight in the beautiful were described in the context of a first time experience, such as Claire's first view from the top of a mountain in Austria, and Susan's first glimpse of a luxurious tent during her safari in Africa. Although it might appear that surprise triggers delight in such instances, it is unlikely the most significant factor giving rise to the emotion. According to Kant, the pleasure one derives from seeing an object

for the first time and finding that object beautiful has two sources: the awareness that one is experiencing the object for the first time and the inherent pleasure in contemplating the object itself. (Budd 1998b). This allows for the possibility of seeking and finding delight again in the object beyond that initial contact. In support of this proposition, informants expressed the desire to experience other similar situations and intentions to return to a specific destination that created delight. For example:

I've been to Austria and, to me, that's the most beautiful country I've ever been to. Switzerland is something quite similar, so I want to go there. [...] I prefer hills than big, big mountains, and Austria reminded me of here. Actually, we're planning to go back to Austria. [...] we want to go to that *same* place where we went hiking.-Claire

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) note that aesthetic products "may be consumed in anticipation of the pleasure they provide" (p.96), and the interviews suggest that consumers may seek reenactment of this pleasure over time. In this context, the hypothesized link between surprise and delight (Oliver et al. 1997) appears tenuous at best. When delight emerged from aesthetic contemplation, it was associated less with surprise than with the materialization of an anticipated and desired experience.

Synchronicity of themes

Three themes underlie the experience of delight-as-magic: interpersonal warmth, aesthetic experience, and leisure experience. While one theme often dominates a specific delight episode, they do not necessarily constitute distinct and mutually exclusive experiences. In fact, these themes often work synergistically to accelerate the experience of delight. For instance, Sarah's delight in coming home stems from the pleasure of seeing her parents after a long separation (interpersonal warmth) and from the escape it represents from her daily responsibilities (leisure experience). This synergy contributes to the magical quality of delight episodes by instilling a sense of synchronicity (Rook 1987) where informants felt that "they were in the right place at the right time, the beneficiaries of a unique and fortuitous convergence of events" (p.194): "You know, the timing, if you feel like going somewhere else, or if the timing is not... But, you know, if you just feel 'This is where I want to be now', you know."—Susan. These moments are spontaneous and attributed to chance, a gift that informants feel lucky and privileged to receive (Belk 1996).

CONCLUSION

The present study refined our understanding of the conceptual domain of customer delight through an interpretation of consumers' travel experiences. This interpretation suggests that, in addition to delight arising from pleasant surprise, there is also delight that could be labeled delight-as-magic. Delight-as-magic refers to the efferent emotional arousal individuals derive from consumption experiences they imbue with a subjective, symbolic meaning. Specifically, interpersonal warmth, aesthetic experiences, and leisure experiences were identified as fertile ground from which delight can be cultivated. Contrary to delight-as-pleasant-surprise, delight-as-magic does not necessitate the presence of surprise and novelty and may be repeated over time as individuals continue to engage in activities that entail a strong hedonic motivation. This idea expands the Rust and Oliver's (2000) concept of "reenacted delight", which posits that the experience of delight may be transformed into a pleasant memory where delighting features are recognized as truly unique and therefore will not expected in future

service encounters. However, the concept of delight-as-magic rests on a slightly different proposition where the memory of delight creates a desire for repeated reenactment, as delighting experiences are actively sought again. This process is due to the presence of delighting features that resonate in a particular way with the customer and sustain a certain aura of meaning that prevents them from becoming perceived as commonplace. Future research should investigate the evolution of delight-as-magic over time. What contributes to maintaining, enhancing, or reducing the occurrence of delight in an object over time? Under which circumstances does the delighting consumption experience lose its aura of pleasure and become trivial?

The concept of delight-as-magic is also appealing for the potential explanation it offers in reconciling Oliver et al.'s (1997) findings regarding the nature of customer delight in different contexts. Indeed, in their survey of symphony concertgoers—decidedly an aesthetic consumption experience—delight was associated with positive affect but not with surprise. According to the conceptualization of delight-as-magic, these findings may be attributable to the fact that it was the very pleasure of rejoicing in the anticipated aesthetic experience that created delight.

The delight episodes reported in the present study resulted from explicit prompts from the researcher who asked informants to identify, if they could, such occurrences in their travel experience. This approach was judged necessary since no informant used the word 'delight' during the first interview. Two questions arise from this procedure. First, could the concept of delight be of little importance in consumers' experiences? This appears unlikely since delight episodes were easily recalled by informants and were described as particularly meaningful to them. Furthermore, the prototype perspective on emotion offers one possible explanation for the absence of the word 'delight' in the first interviews. According to this approach, individuals consider certain emotions as general categories that supersede more narrowly defined emotions that, in a sense, represent facets of prototype emotions (Fehr and Russell 1984). Several episodes of delight were described in the first interview as being characterized by feelings of joy and happiness, two emotions that are hierarchically superior to delight (Richins 1997; Shaver et al. 1987). The second question pertains to the possible bias introduced by directly asking informants to identify delight episodes. While this approach may stimulate acquiescence or impose a concept on the informant's experiences, accounts from the second interviews suggest that this was not the case. Indeed, informants clearly distinguished what they considered to be delight episodes from other experiences. At the end of the second interview, each informant was probed explicitly about their emotions during events discussed in the first interview that were not identified in the second interview as delightful. None of them agreed that delight could have been present in those events, even when asked directly. Nevertheless, the notion that delight may not be a forthcoming concept in consumers' descriptions of their consumption experiences is an intriguing finding that deserves attention in future research.

Finally, the narrow scope of this study needs to be recognized as a limitation. Further insight into the concept of customer delight would be gained from examining the proposed model in other consumption environments. For instance, it would be useful to contrast the experience of delight in contexts that appear to be conducive to delight-as-magic, such as aesthetic products and services, versus contexts that are more mundane and endowed with a lower affective content (Price et al. 1995). The small size of the sample also impedes more in-depth analysis of interesting issues that arose. For example, differences were observed in the experience of delight based on informants' age, with younger informants

reporting more delight episodes in the context of leisure and older informants more frequently taking delight in aesthetic experiences. Likewise, the finding that one informant did not report any delight episode during the numerous trips she has taken over the last fifty years is intriguing and indicative that personal characteristics may intervene in the experience of delight. A larger-scale investigation would permit more attention to such differences.

In summary, this study suggests that customer delight may usefully be construed as a multi-modal construct where delight-as-magic is experientially distinct from delight-as-pleasant-surprise. As such, customer delight is a more complex and perhaps more powerful construct than what extant conceptualizations in the marketing and psychology literature propose. For marketers, this study suggests that there may be more paths to delighting customers than offering pleasant surprises. Fostering interpersonal warmth, creating aesthetically pleasurable experiences, and orchestrating events conducive to leisure experiences may stimulate recurring encounters of delight-as-magic. Future research is needed to build on this exploratory study to determine how the outcomes of these types of delight differ.

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Forewarning & Debriefing as Remedies to Deception in Consumer Research: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the effectiveness of forewarning and debriefing as measures to mitigate the use of deception in consumer research. Findings from an exploratory study suggest that these remedial measures may not only improve practice, but also lower respondent concern and increase the likelihood of research participation. Implications for researchers are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Unethical practices have been blamed for reduced consumer willingness to participate in research (e.g., Bearden, Madden and Uscategui 1998). While some of these practices are clearly avoidable, other practices are arguably unavoidable, particularly some deceptive practices. Forewarning and debriefing have been proposed as remedial measures to mitigate the use of deception, but doubts have been raised about the extent and adequacy of their use by consumer researchers (Toy, Wright and Olson 2001) and respondent reactions to these measures are largely unexplored. In this paper, we examine the effectiveness of forewarning and debriefing as measures to mitigate the use of deception. First, we look at how deception is addressed in psychology as a basis for proposing appropriate remedial measures. We then report an exploratory study where respondents evaluated four common deceptive practices in a market research context that researchers might consider justifiable (primarily to eliminate demand characteristics).

REMEDIAL MEASURES TO MITIGATE DECEPTION

Ethical principles governing psychological research originated with the Nuremberg trials of 1947 and the Nuremberg Code can be seen as the basis of all subsequent guidelines governing experimentation with human participants (Schuler 1982). Voluntary participation and informed consent are fundamental prerequisites. The first American Psychological Association (APA) code was approved in 1953 and made substantially more stringent in the 1973 and subsequent revisions, particularly in light of controversy over the Milgram obedience experiments (Baumrind 1964). The guiding principles are perceived to be exacting, though they are to be applied within a cost-benefit framework, resulting in debates about the code's interpretation and implementation (Kimmel 1996).

The distinction we have made between avoidable and apparently unavoidable but problematic practices in consumer research is consistent with the APA approach to deception. The current version of the code (APA 1992; under revision for 2002) requires that deception not be used if it is avoidable. If an alternative procedure is not feasible, the use of deceptive techniques must be justified by the study's prospective scientific, educational, or applied value. A weakness of this approach is that psychologists might be too quick to anticipate significant scientific output, though Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) provide a partial check.

The APA code also states that participants must not be deceived about a significant aspect of the study that would affect their willingness to participate, perhaps because of physical risks, discomfort, or unpleasant emotional experiences. It is important to consider the form and effects of the deception. Commercial and academic consumer research generally uses only "mild decep-

tions"—deceptions that are not targeted at respondents' fundamental, self-related beliefs or values and unlikely to affect their willingness to participate—instead, respondents are deceived about "peripheral factors such as the research sponsor, why a procedure or measure is used, or the purpose of the study" (Toy, Olson and Wright 1989, p. 72). However, while the risk of harm to the individual by or as a result of the deception might be less or negligible, even mild deceptions are morally problematic (Kimmel and Smith 2001).

Deception is widely used in psychology, notwithstanding the provisions of the APA code and critics who charge that any use of deception is an unacceptable violation of the individual's right to voluntarily choose to participate in research (Adair, Dushenko and Lindsay 1985). Proponents of allowing deception argue that it is essential in many studies. Broder (1998), for example, cites memory research and studies of incidental learning and of cognitive illusions that could not have been conducted without deception. Under these circumstances, it is argued, the decision to be made is not whether to use deception, but whether the research is necessary (Kimmel 1996).

The APA code stipulates that deception must be explained promptly to participants within a debriefing to correct any misconceptions. However, it may not be sufficient simply to tell respondents that they were deceived and to provide correct information; effective debriefing may require "dehoaxing" and "desensitizing" (Toy, et al. 1989). Providing an educational benefit is often viewed as an important part of debriefing, particularly if the participants are students (Schuler 1982). This does not lessen the possible harm from deception, but it may partially compensate and be included in the researcher's assessment of the benefits and costs of research participation.

Forewarning is a more uncertain remedy to deception. Under informed consent provisions of the APA code (1992), researchers are obligated to brief participants beforehand about the study and explain that, should they choose to participate, they might withdraw at any time. However, the participant's decision relies upon the information provided by the researcher. Clearly, if fully informed about the study, there can be no deception. Under forewarning, subjects in a deception experiment may be "informed in advance that some information may have to be withheld and that full disclosure of the purpose and procedures will be made at the end of the experiment" (Adair, et al., p. 60). However, if deceit is used to obtain consent, by definition it cannot be informed (Baumrind 1985). Further, reliance is placed on the researcher's estimate of the risk to the respondent (Schuler 1982). One solution to these problems is to pretest the experiment to establish whether subjects would give consent, absent the deception (Kimmel 1996). A similar approach is adopted in the study reported below.

A case can be made that intentional deception is never permissible (Bok 1978). However, a more balanced view would argue that some deception in consumer research is morally justifiable (Kimmel and Smith 2001). In keeping with the treatment of deception in psychological research, we propose treating deception in consumer research as permissible under conditions where the researcher has no alternative procedure available, the deception is mild, and appropriate remedial measures are used. We recognize that this

position is not uncontroversial and note that our focus is on the use of remedial measures to mitigate the use of deception, rather than the ethics of deception, per se.

The appropriateness of remedial measures can be subject to empirical inquiry. The purpose of the study reported below was to illustrate in an exploratory study how possible remedial measures for deception in consumer research might be investigated and to demonstrate their effectiveness. Drawing on psychology, as discussed, the remedial measures examined are forewarning, debriefing, and the use of monetary and other forms of compensation. In addition, we explored the implications of a non-deceptive approach, i.e., telling the truth. Remedial measures were examined within a market research context, drawing upon industry codes of conduct to establish that the practice is considered problematic.

STUDY OF CONSUMER RESPONSES TO DECEPTIVE PRACTICES

Overview

Respondents evaluated four deceptive practices that might be considered unavoidable and justifiable (subject to the above criteria): study purpose and sponsor deception, undisclosed taping, and interview length deception. Benefits from research participation were also explored, consistent with Schuler's (1982) observations on the importance of assessing research costs and benefits for participants. Scenarios were manipulated in an attempt to determine whether the remedial measures we have identified may reduce respondent concern about deceptive practices and increase the likelihood of future participation in research. We sought ethical evaluations and emotional reactions of consumers as well as measures of the impact of these practices and of possible remedial measures on research participation.

Development of Scenarios

Pilot study. In a mall-intercept study, 352 adult consumers were asked to imagine that they were a participant in a given market research scenario and to indicate their response to the described event. In total, the pilot study examined consumer reactions to 35 scenarios (each respondent rated 3 unrelated scenarios). The practices found to be most egregious to consumers were: study sponsor deception, breach of confidentiality, frugging (fundraising under the guise of research), videotaping without consent, and the non-disclosure of a follow-up interview. Some remedial measures were tested; for example, warning people of a follow-up interview led to more positive ratings.

The criteria for selection of scenarios for the current study were whether the deceptive practice was ethically suspect (relative to industry codes), perceived to be relatively frequent, and arguably unavoidable. Accordingly, practices included in the pilot study that are clearly avoidable were dropped from the main study, including frugging and the non-disclosure of a follow-up interview. A further consideration was the scope for remedial measures that lessen the potential for harm and reduce negative reactions to the research experience. In addition to the pilot study, the development of the main study scenarios was informed by a separate investigation of practitioner and consumer respondent experiences of market research.¹ Following pretests, the final set of 23 scenarios was adopted. Below, we describe the scenarios used and our rationale for their selection.

1. Length of Interview. Interview length deception often occurs because interviewers fear respondents would decline to participate if given an accurate estimate of the time needed, perhaps because they have overlong and poorly constructed questionnaires.

It is widely regarded as frequent and problematic. We regard deception by commission, where interviewers lie about the interview length, as unethical and clearly avoidable. This is consistent with industry codes that prohibit deception to secure cooperation (e.g., ICC/ESOMAR 1986) or specify that "respondents must not be enticed into an interview by a misrepresentation of the length of the interview" (CASRO 1995, p. 5). Deception by omission is more troubling. Some recent industry initiatives require interviewers to state the likely duration of the interview (MRA CAC 1993). However, for some studies, length may vary substantially, according to consumer responses and interest (Laroche, McGown, and Rainville 1986). Accordingly, five scenarios involving interview length were tested: (1) the interview is said to last 15 minutes and it does last 15 minutes; (2) the interview is said to last 15 minutes and it takes 30; (3) the interview is said to last 30 minutes and it does take 30; (4) the respondent is not told the interview length and it takes 15 minutes; (5) the respondent is not told the interview length and it takes 30 minutes.

2. Taping. Undisclosed taping of an interview would be deception by omission. Researchers may not wish to disclose taping because it might bias responses or influence participation rates. The CMOR (1999) Respondent Bill of Rights states that respondents will be told in advance if an interview is to be recorded, consistent with CASRO (1995) and PMRS (1984). However, ICC/ESOMAR (1999), in a change to its code, permits recording without advance notice if it would otherwise result in "atypical behavior". However, respondents must be told about the recording at the end of the interview. Accordingly, two possible remedial measures for audiotaping were examined: debriefing and forewarning. There were three scenarios: (1) a control scenario in which the respondent becomes suspicious of taping (due to "clicking" heard on the phone line) but the respondent is never informed of the taping by the interviewer; (2) the respondent is informed at the end of the survey that the interview was taped; (3) the respondent is forewarned (during solicitation) that the interview will be taped.

3. Deception Concerning Purpose of Study. Revealing the purpose of a study may bias responses. CMOR's (1999) Respondent Bill of Rights commits researchers to disclosing the nature of the survey. The MRA CAC (1993) guidelines suggest that this need only note the general topic of discussion. Particularly troubling are instances of deception by omission where a different purpose is implied though unstated. For example, Tessar (1994) reported consumer frustration at being asked to do one thing (watch television programs) and then being questioned on something else (advertising). Accordingly, a typical advertising effectiveness research scenario was utilized to examine purpose deception. The respondent in the scenario is asked to watch a television program, even though the purpose of the study is to test advertisements aired during the program. Five remedial measures (or combinations thereof) for this deception were examined: (1) forewarning that the purpose cannot be revealed; (2) debriefing about purpose; (3) providing a benefit to compensate for the deception (a quiz about the program, with the possibility of winning a prize); (4) forewarn-

¹Two separate studies were helpful in developing the scenarios used here. A survey of American Marketing Association (AMA) practitioners provided confirmation of prior research on the prevalence of specific suspect practices and suggestions for alternative approaches and perceived justifications for practices considered unavoidable. Secondly, a mall-intercept study improved our understanding of consumers' positive and negative feelings toward research and of the context within which ethically problematic practices may arise.

ing and debriefing; (5) forewarning, debriefing, and providing the benefit.

4. Deception Concerning Sponsor of Study. Revealing the sponsor of a study also might bias responses. Moreover, it can conflict with an obligation of research companies to protect client confidentiality that is specified in most industry codes. CMOR's (1999) Respondent Bill of Rights, the MRA CAC (1993) guidelines, and some other codes, commit researchers to disclosing the name of the interviewer and the research company. This disclosure is unlikely to produce biased responses because it does not reveal the study sponsor. The problem is more difficult for in-house researchers where nondisclosure or deception may seem unavoidable (Sudman 1998). Accordingly, five scenarios were tested: (1) control condition in which sponsor is not mentioned; (2) sponsor of research (client) is revealed; (3) respondent forewarned that sponsor cannot be revealed; (4) research firm identified and respondent forewarned that sponsor cannot be revealed; (5) respondent forewarned that sponsor cannot be revealed in advance, then is debriefed about sponsor identity.

5. Benefits. The effects of research participation benefits were examined, in keeping with our earlier discussion of compensation in psychological research. Monetary incentives are recommended (e.g., Bearden, Madden, and Usategui 1998) and the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR 1999) advocates incentives as a "best practice" for maximizing response rates. One of CMOR's earliest initiatives was the development of "thank you" cards for mailing to survey respondents that explained the benefits of market research. We tested four scenarios: (1) a control condition in which no benefits or incentives were given (same as control condition in study sponsor deception), (2) indirect benefits of research ("participation in research helps produce products that people would like to see in the stores"), provided during solicitation; (3) indirect benefits of research provided at the conclusion of the interview; (4) \$5 voucher incentive; and (5) \$20 voucher incentive.

Method

Data were collected in mall-intercept interviews in a middle class mall in Jacksonville, Florida. Potential participants were stopped as they shopped and were asked to participate in the study. Each respondent saw one scenario only, to minimize possible demand effects. Respondents were asked to read the scenario and then answer 3 sets of questions on the following two pages. The first two sets of questions asked for reactions to the scenario, the third asked respondents for demographic information and their level of participation in market research studies. When they were finished, respondents were thanked for their participation and given a written debriefing. A sample scenario (undisclosed study purpose with forewarning) is provided below:

Imagine that one afternoon you are at home and the phone rings. The person on the other end of the phone says:

"Hello, I'm with a national marketing research firm and we are calling consumers to ask whether they would be willing to participate in a study by watching a new TV program airing on network TV this evening. We will call you after the show to discuss your reactions. We would like you to watch this program as you would any other program, therefore we cannot say anything more about the specific questions you will be asked. Would you be willing to participate?"

You agree. After the show the research firm calls. The first few questions are about the TV program, the remainder of the 15 minute interview is about the advertising that appeared during the program.

Dependent measures. Our dependent measures were primarily intended to establish whether consumers would respond more favorably to research practices that include remedial measures to mitigate deception. Two sets of dependent measures were used, presented to the respondents as questions 1 and 2 (rotated within each scenario type to minimize possible order effects). One set measured respondents' ethical evaluation of the market research company's action described in the scenario. The set comprised the eight items of the Reidenbach and Robin (1990) multidimensional ethics scale (MES) and a single unidimensional measure of ethical evaluation (very ethical/not at all ethical). It should be noted that these measures are of respondents' perceptions of the ethics of the research practices. Many deceptive practices could still be unethical regardless of how they might be evaluated by research respondents.

The second set of dependent measures comprised 7 items measuring emotional reactions to the scenario, its effects on research participation, and whether respondents felt deceived. More specifically, respondents were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with seven statements relating to participation in the study described (where appropriate), future participation in market research, and whether they would feel upset, angry, happy, irritated, or deceived by the experience. Our assessment of emotional reactions to research practices is in contrast to previous studies. While practitioners and academics may discuss questionable practices in terms of whether or not they are ethical, it is quite possible that consumers themselves may evaluate practices in terms of how irritating or upsetting they are. Again, our purpose is to establish the effectiveness of remedial measures. We expect consumers to respond more favorably to the more effective remedial measures on one or more of our dependent measures.

Sample. Four hundred and six individuals agreed to participate in the study (a 24.5% participation rate).² The sample was 50.5% female and median household income was \$30,000-44,999. Relative to the U.S. population, minorities were overrepresented (25.9% of respondents were black, 60.2% were white) and the sample was skewed toward the young (66% were 37 or younger), and was better educated (65.3% had one year of college or more). Respondents were familiar with market research; two-thirds had been asked to participate in a marketing research study in the previous 12 months, 27.8% reported having been asked to participate 3 or more times in the past year (the mean value for prior research participation was 2.41).

RESULTS

Table 1 shows mean values for respondent ratings of the different scenarios. Below, we discuss the analysis of each group of

²The contract research firm reported a refusal rate (percentage of people who said no when asked to participate) of less than 1%. However, this is after "wave-offs", people who, when passing the interviewer, indicate that they are not interested in participating in a research study. The research firm reported a wave-off rate of 75.5%, consistent with other studies it has conducted in this mall. Hence, the participation rate for this study was 24.5%.

TABLE 1
Respondent Ratings of Scenarios (N=406)¹

Scenario	Participate	Future	Negative	Deceived	Happy	Unethical
1. Length of Interview						
told 15/actually 15	N/A	4.28	2.32	2.33	4.35	3.72
told 15/actually 30	N/A	3.76	3.51	3.59	4.12	3.59
told 30/actually 30	N/A	4.50	2.31	1.94	3.83	3.22
not told length/actually 15	N/A	4.11	3.07	2.50	4.11	3.22
not told length/actually 30	N/A	5.28	2.15	2.17	3.50	3.11
2. Taping						
undisclosed audio-taping (c)	N/A	4.06	3.29	3.47	2.88	4.76
debriefing	N/A	4.19	2.98	3.63	4.00	4.45
forewarning	N/A	4.72	3.04	2.28	4.61	3.06
3. Deception– Purpose						
told program/really ad (c)	N/A	3.33	2.96	3.06	3.44	3.72
forewarning	N/A	4.67	2.94	2.78	4.78	3.89
debriefing	N/A	5.39	4.33	4.89	4.67	2.89
told program/really ad/incentive	N/A	3.72	3.23	3.44	3.67	3.83
forewarning and debriefing	N/A	3.81	2.71	2.75	3.81	4.38
forewarning/debriefing/incentive	N/A	3.61	3.89	3.22	3.94	4.11
4. Deception– Sponsor						
sponsor identified (c)	3.33	3.83	2.86	2.28	3.78	3.72
forewarning	3.61	3.67	2.48	3.56	3.71	3.11
research firm/forewarning	4.50	3.78	2.87	3.22	4.44	3.17
forewarning/debriefing	N/A	3.67	2.89	2.89	3.56	4.06
generic control (c)	N/A	3.29	3.87	3.88	3.65	4.06
5. Benefits						
indirect/solicitation	N/A	3.83	3.31	3.06	3.67	4.28
indirect/at end	N/A	4.33	3.04	2.56	4.22	3.83
\$5 voucher	N/A	3.94	2.98	3.61	3.76	3.61
\$20 voucher	N/A	4.33	2.54	3.06	3.94	3.17
generic control (c)	N/A	3.29	3.87	3.88	3.65	4.06

¹Approximately 18 respondents per scenario.

scenarios in turn. ANOVA's and contrast tests were conducted to analyze differences in responses across scenarios. Because the dependent measures "irritated," "upset," and "angry" were highly correlated, they were averaged as an index of negative reactions (Cronbach's $\alpha=.87$). Ethical evaluations reported in the table and analyzed below reflect the unidimensional measure only.³

1. Length of Interview. In examining interview length, we are interested in: (1) whether deception about length led to a more negative reaction than did the truth (or no information) about

length; (2) whether the actual length of the interview would have an impact on respondents' reactions; and, (3) whether telling versus not telling respondents about the length of the interview would influence responses. As Table 1 shows, respondents had the greatest negative reaction when they were deceived about the length of time the interview would take. Respondents who read the scenario in which there was deception about the length of the interview ("told 15/actually 30") had significantly higher negative reactions ($t(84)=2.93, p<.01$) and felt significantly more deceived ($t(84)=3.52, p<.01$) than respondents who saw the other scenarios. Deception about length did not significantly affect how happy respondents would feel ($t(84)=.47, n.s.$), or how ethical they judged the research to be ($t(84)=.65, n.s.$).

The two scenarios in which the interview lasted 15 minutes were contrasted against the two scenarios in which the interview lasted 30 minutes (the deception scenario was excluded). The length of the interview did not affect responses to scenarios: the t-

³We conducted exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to test the dimensionality of the MES in this study. This revealed a two-factor structure rather than the three dimensions of the scale, suggesting that attempts to understand the underlying rationale for respondents' ethical judgments, based on the MES, would not be reliable in this context.

scores for contrasts for all seven of the dependent measures were non-significant. There were also no differences in reaction between scenarios in which the length of the interview was disclosed during solicitation and when the length was not disclosed (the deception scenario was again excluded from this analysis). Those who were not told the length of a 30 minute interview were more likely to participate in the future ($t(84)=2.91, p<.01$), had less of a negative reaction ($t(84)=3.09, p<.01$) and felt less deceived ($t(84)=2.95, p<.01$) than did those who were deceived about interview length.

In summary, respondents appear to be most sensitive to being deceived about the length of the interview. The actual length of the interview (15 or 30 minutes) did not affect ratings nor did the disclosure of the interview length at the commencement of the interview. However, participation in future research would appear to be more likely if people are not told the length of a 30 minute interview, rather than told that it will be 15 minutes and it takes 30 minutes.

2. Taping. Two possible remedial measures for audiotaping were examined: debriefing and forewarning. These two procedures were contrasted against a control scenario in which the respondent becomes suspicious of taping. Debriefing respondents at the end of the interview did not affect reactions relative to the control (all t values were *n.s.*). Forewarning, however, did prove to be a successful remedial measure. Forewarned respondents were significantly happier with their participation, felt less deceived, and judged that the procedure was significantly less unethical than respondents in the other two taping conditions ($t(47)=2.28, p<.05, t(48)=2.19, p<.05$ and $t(48)=2.82, p<.01$, respectively). Forewarning produced no significant differences in negative emotional reactions or willingness to participate in the future.

3. Deception Concerning Purpose of Study. Five remedial measures (or combinations thereof) for study purpose deception were examined. Forewarning respondents that they would not be told the purpose of the study (as opposed to simply deceiving them) led respondents to be significantly more likely to participate in the future, and significantly more likely to be happy with the experience ($t(100)=2.48, p<.05$ and $t(100)=2.46, p<.05$, respectively). Debriefing respondents (relative to the control group) had a diverse impact on reactions to the scenario: debriefed respondents were significantly more willing to participate in the future and were happier with the research experience ($t(100)=3.82, p<.001$ and $t(101)=2.46, p<.05$, respectively). But they also felt more deceived and had more of a negative reaction to the scenario than did the control respondents ($t(100)=3.22, p<.01$ and $t(100)=2.77, p<.01$, respectively). The other remedial measures (incentive; forewarning and debriefing; and forewarning, debriefing and incentive) did not have any significant effect on reactions and no remedial measure had any significant effect on ethical judgments relative to the control condition (all t values were *n.s.*). Thus, while forewarning produced some positive reactions, debriefing produced both positive and negative reactions, perhaps because it reveals the deception. Accordingly, in combining forewarning and deception, the positive effects of the forewarning appear to be canceled out by telling respondents they were deceived. In addition, offering an incentive did not ameliorate the effects of the deception.

4. Deception Concerning Sponsor of Study. Methods of protecting against bias due to respondent awareness of the study sponsor were examined by comparing a control scenario in which the sponsor is identified with three alternative practices. As Table 1 shows, the means across the different scenarios are quite similar. There were no significant differences between the control scenario and the alternative strategies (with the exception of a single significant finding: respondents felt more deceived when they were

forewarned that they would not be told the study sponsor compared to when the sponsor was identified). However, when contrasted against a generic control, where there was no identification of the study sponsor, all four of these remedial measure scenarios evoked less negative reactions. There were significant differences on the negative reactions measure between the control and forewarning ($t(83)=3.03, p<.01$), research firm/forewarning ($t(83)=2.25, p<.05$), and forewarning/debriefing ($t(83)=2.18, p<.05$), though not for the other dependent measures (all t values *n.s.*). Thus, the findings suggest that not identifying the study sponsor can be problematic and show that remedial measures can reduce respondent concerns, but they do not speak to the superiority of any one remedial measure.

5. Benefits. The effects of explaining indirect benefits of research to consumers and of offering a voucher incentive were examined. The explanation of indirect benefits during solicitation did not significantly affect reactions relative to the control (in which respondents were simply asked to participate). The explanation of indirect benefits at the end of the interview, however, did leave respondents feeling significantly less deceived than respondents in the control ($t(84)=2.08, p<.05$). The vouchers did not have any effect on respondents relative to the control, except for the finding that the \$20 voucher led to significantly lower negative reactions compared to the control ($t(84)=2.80, p<.01$). Thus, there is some indication that the incentives for participation in research need to be reasonably substantial. However, there were no significant differences on any of the measures between the \$20 voucher scenario and the indirect benefits scenarios, suggesting monetary incentives may not be needed if respondents can be persuaded the research is worthwhile.

DISCUSSION

Overall, we found that remedial measures did reduce perceived negative consequences and mitigate the use of deceptive practices. Consistent with prior industry research (e.g., Humbaugh 1998), we also confirmed that deceptive practices (specifically, interview length deception and study purpose deception) appear likely to reduce future participation, at least relative to remedial measures. Our study points to the potential effectiveness of remedial measures in market research, at least for the deceptive practices investigated. Subject to our study limitations, research industry efforts to promote development of these measures might well be warranted, as well as their more widespread adoption by academic researchers. Below, we comment on each measure in turn.

Telling the truth is more of an alternative to deception than a remedial measure. Clearly, from an ethical standpoint, it is preferable to avoidable deception. However, researchers may be uncertain when a deception is avoidable. Our study suggests that it is possible to test when a deception can be avoided without compromising research integrity or participation rates. For example, we found that disclosure in advance of the actual length of even a 30-minute interview did not result in more negative evaluations relative to nondisclosure or relative to disclosure of a 15-minute interview. Also, we found that disclosure of the research firm in combination with forewarning (that sponsor identity could not be revealed) was no different to forewarning alone.

The results of our study suggest that forewarning has considerable potential in mitigating adverse consequences of deception in market research. Forewarning about taping led respondents to feel happier with the research experience, to feel less deceived by the research, and to judge it as more ethical than did debriefing or failing to disclose that the interview was being taped. Likewise, forewarning respondents that they would not be told the purpose of

the study made them happier with the experience and more likely to participate in the future. Forewarning also reduced negative reactions to study sponsor deception. Thus, telling respondents ahead of time that they will be taped, or that they will not be told the sponsor or the purpose of a study, appears to be an effective remedial measure.

Debriefing was less effective in reducing respondent concern about deceptive practices. In some cases, debriefing generated negative reactions, including feeling deceived—perhaps because the deception is revealed and its effects are not fully assuaged as a result of the debriefing. However, from an ethical standpoint, this may not make it any less necessary as a way of redressing a deception, at least in the absence of forewarning. Nonetheless, forewarning alone may suffice for much commercial research, given our findings on forewarning. In particular, it may be sufficient in most studies to forewarn respondents that a study sponsor cannot be revealed for reasons of client confidentiality. One test to be applied is whether advance knowledge of the identity of a research sponsor would have influenced the respondent's decision to participate.

Compensation also appears to be effective, though perhaps it need not be monetary. Explaining the benefits of research participation at the end of an interview appeared to be advantageous. While not significantly affecting willingness to participate in the future, or positive or negative feelings about the research relative to a control condition, telling respondents why their participation is worthwhile reduced feelings of deception, and was generally as effective as providing a \$20 voucher.

Turning more specifically to implications for academic research, we note that Toy, et al. (1989) found that many academic marketing studies employ deception, though less than 40% reported conducting a debriefing. While the proportion of debriefings that actually took place was likely higher, it's very possible that many researchers are not sufficiently familiar with debriefing techniques or the ethical obligations that go with the use of deception (Toy et al. 2001). Our discussion of deception shows that there may be good reasons for journal editors to require that the use of debriefings be reported and, perhaps, the rationale for the deception (Adair, et al. 1985). A further consideration is the obligation of an educational compensation to academic research participants, who are often students.

Limitations

Interpretation of our results must be tempered by the study limitations. First, although our findings for remedial measures overall are relatively robust, this was a broad and inevitably exploratory study and this limits claims that can be made about the relative merits of different remedial measures or their most appropriate levels. A more complete design would extend to a greater number of treatments and levels for each treatment and with more scope for analysis across issues. Second, there are inevitable trade-offs between control and richness in the use of an experimental design. More specifically, respondents read descriptions of research situations, and were not subject to the questionable practices directly. While we considered the latter approach, we concluded that to deliberately engage in unethical practices in order to test their effects would not be appropriate. Third, it is likely that there is some degree of non-response bias influencing our findings. We had only respondents willing to participate in the mall-intercept. In many respects, however, the participants in our study represent the segment of greatest interest to research practitioners: those who are willing to participate in research and comprise the pool of available respondents for market research. Fourth, although administered as a mall-intercept, all the scenarios in our study questionnaire re-

ferred to phone research. Finally, the scenarios were set in a market research context, though we believe they are applicable to academic consumer research as well as commercial research. Problematic practices and remedial measures could be explored within the context of academic research, perhaps with researchers testing different approaches as part of other studies (e.g., changes in respondent satisfaction with short or long debriefings).

CONCLUSION

In sum, we argue that deception in commercial and academic consumer research may be avoidable because alternatives are often available. Academic researchers are well advised to anticipate IRBs drawing their attention to possible alternative non-deceptive approaches. Where alternative procedures are not available, the researcher must consider whether an intentional deception is warranted by the possible benefits of the study, even if the deception is mild. If the deception is considered justifiable, its effects may be mitigated by the use of forewarning and debriefing. This approach may make research participation less aversive in addition to being less potentially unethical and reducing any harm that might otherwise be perpetrated.

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